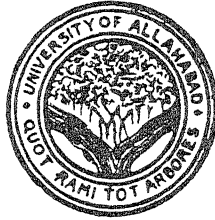


**CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT IN THE NOVELS OF  
KAMALA MARKANDAYA AND RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA :  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**



**THESIS**  
Submitted For  
**THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
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## PREFACE

Although Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala are quite distinguished as Indian English novelists on the contemporary scenario, the particular aspect which has been dealt with in this work has not been studied in depth so far.

As the world is shrinking fast a cultural confrontation between the East and the West becomes inevitable, but when the two basically different cultures come close a clash between the two is unavoidable. The two novelists dexterously dramatise this very inevitability of cross-cultural confrontation in their novels. As this inevitability of cross-cultural conflict constitutes the thematic core in most of their novels, to overlook this aspect is to be patently unjust to the novelists.

The work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter attempts to explore the cross-cultural conflict in the Indian English novels and present a critical survey thereof. The second and the third chapters deal with the conflict in the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala respectively. A comparative study of the two novelists regarding the

cross-cultural conflict is made in the fourth chapter and the fifth chapter sums up the different perspectives of the two novelists on one and the same theme.

I would be failing in my duty if I did not record here my gratitude to Dr. Madhusudan Prasad (Reader in English, Department of English Studies and Modern European Languages, University of Allahabad), my supervisor, who took a deep interest in this work and without whose kind considerateness, unstinting help and able guidance it would not have been possible to complete the work. I am also obliged to Dr. J.P.Kulshreshtha (Professor and Head, Department of English Studies and Modern European Languages, University of Allahabad), Professor Richard Dutt and Professor K.G.Srivastava for having encouraged the completion of my thesis.

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In the end I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all my friends and well wishers as well as



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## CHAPTER - I

### TREATMENT OF CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT IN THE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL : A CRITICAL SURVEY

Kipling thought that, "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet". However, we see that the material West and the spiritual East have been able to meet today in the writings of the Indo-Anglian writers, thus giving the lie to Kipling's poetic assertion. This has been possible, we can say, to a large extent due to modern and enlightened education and the increasing global shrinking of the world. This encounter of the East with the West results in an interplay of ideas which in turn results in the rise of a chain of reactions. With this interchange of views and ideas a unique kind of culture is born. In the East, a gradual transition from the superstitious, orthodox age to the age of reason and logic takes place. Man begins to walk further away from the lap of nature. He gets caught up in the mechanical web and is buffeted by various new ideologies. On the other hand the scientific and practical West is plagued by the spiritual and idealistic ideologies of the East. In such a fluid state of affairs some individuals cussedly hold on to the old traditions and superstitious and shut their

minds to any alien influence. Other practical minded individuals desire a compromise. They strive to assimilate the good points of both the cultures so as to improve the society they live in.

Many Indian - English writers experienced these problems arising from the East-West encounter and the transition thereafter. As writers, and novelists in particular, are said to be products of their age they could not but help penning down their observations very frankly in their works.

Meenakshi Mukherjee has studied this aspect of the relation of the writer's life with the East-West encounter and conflict they depict in their writings. She observes:

The majority of Indo-Anglian writers today (with one or two notable exceptions), it will be observed, have had at least part of their education abroad. Because of their intimate experience of a culture other than their own they are made aware of their Indian-ness as well as of the difference in the two systems of values : one rather acquired, the other inherited and often taken for granted... The inter-cultural nature of his own being becomes

for such a writer a theme of profound interest. Therefore, the search for one's identity is found to be a common and recurrent theme in Indo-Anglian fiction.<sup>1</sup>

So most of the novels right from the beginning of Indian-English literature variously configure the cross-cultural conflict between the East and the West zeroing in on the efforts towards a reconciliation between the two.

Such writings can be divided into ones written before Independence of India i.e. 1947 and ones written after Independence. The writers of such fiction have themselves had a close encounter with both the cultures. They were either brought up in India and educated as well as settled in the West like Raja Rao and Kamala Markandaya, or were brought up and educated in the West but settled in India like Ruth Praver Jhabvala.

It is believed that Sarat Kumar Ghosh's The Prince of Destiny is the first Indian novel to deal

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1. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers (India) Pvt.Ltd., 1974, p.66.

with East-West encounter. According to K.A.Ramamurti, The Prince of Destiny and S.M.Mitra's Hindupore "visualise a golden age of East-West relationship in which the two cultures... blend under the overwhelming influence of pure human feelings, feelings of love and understanding which ... transcend all imaginable barriers and inhibitions."<sup>2</sup> The two books try to remove all fallacies about East and West and thereby bring them together. They even suggest inter-racial marriages to effect the synthesis they advocate.

S.K.Ghosh's book "is full of many interesting discussions for understanding the conflict in the view point of the East and the West."<sup>3</sup> The author uses Barath, the hero of the novel, to argue his point about the union of the two cultures so as to "turn their conflict into concord." Harish Raizada has very aptly observed :

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2. K.S.Ramamurti, Rise of the Indian Novel in English, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 197.
  3. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment, Bareilly : Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p. 37.

The understanding which he (Barath) acquires about the English and their life during his stay in England, makes him reject the prejudices he has cultivated earlier against West partly because of the imperialistic writings of Rudyard Kipling and partly because of his own religious training by Vashista. Soon he turns into as he himself says, 'Britain's sincerest friend in India' and considers the striving after the concord of East and West as the chief mission and destiny of his life.<sup>4</sup>

In the novel the protagonist goes to England and falls in love with Nora, an English girl. Their cultures are different and so she cannot understand and appreciate the manner in which Barath shows his love for her by touching her feet and burning sticks of incense before her picture. Nevertheless "The book presents a union of the highest ideals of the East with the highest ideals of the West - a union that was left to an Easterner to conceive and realise."<sup>5</sup>

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4. Harish Raizada, The Lotus and the Rose: Indian Fiction in English (1850-1947), Aligarh: The Arts Faculty, Aligarh Muslim University, 1978, p.37.

5. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment, Bareilly : Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p.57.

In the novel Hindupore also the story is woven in such a manner as to emphasise on a synthesis of the two cultures. "The aim of Hindupore is to explain India and Indians to the British and to plead for better understanding and sympathy between the two nationalities."<sup>6</sup>

Some of the other first generation writers who talked about Indo-British relationships were Lal Behari Day (Govinda Samanta), Madhaviah (Clarinda and Lieut. Panju), Behramji Malabari, N.W.Pai, A. Subramanyam (Indira Devi) and K.E.Ghamat (My Friend, The Barrister) Indira Devi, a romance of modern political India, is a story about a woman who is harassed by a Nawab but is finally saved by the Englishman she loved.

Thillai Govindan is the story of a Brahman who is caught between the old Hindu culture and the modern European one. It is the most representative work of A. Madhaviah. The protagonist of this novel is at first swept away by the materialism of the West, but by the end he returns to the spiritual fold of the East.

According to Harish Raizada :

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6 K.S.Ramamurti, Rise of the Indian Novel in English, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 197.

It is a spiritual biography of an Indian of the early decade of the twentieth century, whose traditional values of life are shaken by the impact of European materialism. The reversion of hero to his faith is the symbol of the victory of spiritual values over materialistic ones. It signifies the assertion of the values of East over those of West. Whether an autobiographical work or purely a creation of the writer's imagination it provides a very fascinating picture of the contrasts and confusions faced by Hindu antiquity which finds itself suddenly plunged into the whirlpool of European culture.<sup>7</sup>

K.E.Ghamat is also one of the early writers who, like S.K.Ghosh and S.N.Mitra, thinks that East and West can unite. He even describes R.Kipling's view as "untrue, pessimistic, and based upon insufficient knowledge of the facts of Indian life"<sup>8</sup>.

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7. Dr. Harish Raizada, The Lotus and the Rose : Indian Fiction in English (1850-1947), Aligarh : The Arts Faculty, Aligarh Muslim University, 1978, p.55.

8. K.E.Ghamat, 'Preface', My Friend, The Barrister (Bombay, 1908), p.II



There were also some early women writers of English fiction in India who touched on the theme of East-West conflict . They were Toru Dutt, Mrs. Ghosal and Cornelia Sorabji . About Cornelia Sorabji's India Calling K.S.Ramamurti states:

Cornelia Sorabji's India Calling is nothing but the statement of the dilemma of a writer whose love for England and India is equally strong and passionate, though it may be said that the search operates at less complex levels.<sup>9</sup>

All great events and movements of a nation are sure to find their way into the literature of the times. The national struggle for freedom from the British rule is also reflected in several novels of the period. As the rulers of India came from the west along with their culture, language and all, a resistance of such a foreign rule by the Indians cannot but be called an East-West conflict. Raja Rao's Kanthapura, C.N. Zutshi's Motherland, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas Inquilab, R.K. Narayan's Waiting for the Mahatma, Frieda H. Das' Into the Sun, M.R. Anand's Untouchable and The Sword and the Sickle, D.F.Karaka's We Never Die, Arthur (Anand) S.

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9. \* K.S.Ramamurti, op.cit., p.222.

Lall's The House of Adampur all these novels and many more deal with such East West encounters. Even The Prince of Destiny revolves round this theme of struggle for freedom. The characters of the novel are determined "to oust the English from India and eliminate West from East."<sup>10</sup> Mr. Harish Raizada observes:

Being a shrewd observer of the international political situation, Mr. Ghosh foresees the changes in the relationship between East and West in the near future . He forecasts that East is bound to assert its importance at least and cease being exploited by West."<sup>11</sup>

In The House at Adampur Anand Lall "Writes with the understanding and warmth of one who knows best and worse of both the East and the West and of the brutal, as well as intellectual conflicts of those critical years"<sup>12</sup>

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10. Harish Raizada, op.cit., p. 37.

11. Ibid, p. 41.

12. New York Times Book Review: Quoted by 'Book lover', May 58.

As education spread, and western ideas began flowing into India the new generation gradually came to realise the social backwardness of the Indian masses. To highlight such backwardness and to effect reform a number of novelists came to the fore. One such novelist was Mr. Hasan Ali. He was "a man with a vision" He wanted an "orientation of old values of life and adoption of new and progressive ones". He felt that both the East and the West denied proper opportunities "to every individual for the development of his personality... East with its mire of orthodoxy and conservatism and West with its heap of prejudices and colour bias, clog a man's feet at every step and render him completely crippled for any development of his talents."<sup>13</sup> The same kinds of stars await Rama, the young hero of The Changeling. He is caught in the transitional age when neither the eastern nor the western culture can fulfill his needs. Both in fact contribute to create such a tension in the mind of Rama that he is left without roots. Commenting on the novel Harish Raizada says:

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13. Harish Raizada, op.cit., pp.81-82.

His real fame, however, rests on his novel, The Changeling, which is dedicated to Romain Rolland, 'The reconciler of the ideals of East and West'. It is the story of a young and progressive Indian who makes a bold effort to unite two worlds - one dead and the other powerless to be born. As is natural he breaks down fighting against his destiny and adverse forces.<sup>14</sup>

But Sir Hari Singh Gour has a different view point regarding East-West relationship. He says that to absorb the good points of both the cultures is not bad, but blind imitation of the other culture brings only misery and ruin . In his novel, His Only Love, he "intends to show the sad condition of the younger generation when they have cut themselves adrift from their traditional moorings."<sup>15</sup> Harish Raizada asserts:

... His only Love satirises the anarchical conditions arising in Indian society from the blind and thoughtless imitation of Western ideals. The Westernized young men and women who

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14. Ibid., p.80

15. P.P.Mehta, op.cit., p.69.

consider themselves enlightened and emancipated and show a deliberate and complete disregard of Indian culture in preference to Western modes, ultimately bring misery and humiliation to themselves and their relatives and friends by their actions.<sup>16</sup>

Kumar Guru (C.Subramani Ayyar) also thinks in the same manner. In his works, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, he mildly protests "against the Westernization of the soul of India" in the transitional period.

V.V.Chintamani has written the novel Vedantam with a subtitle, 'The Clash of Traditions'.

According to Dr. Harish Raizada:

As its sub-title 'The Clash of Traditions', suggests, the novel describes the impact of English education and civilization on the cultural traditions of India. This clash of the Western and Indian traditions is depicted through the life and character of Vedantam, the hero after whom the novel is named.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Harish Raizada, op.cit., p.146.

17. Harish Raizada, op.cit., p.219.

One of the early writers, Krishnaswamy Nagarajan represents the alienation which arises from a confrontation of old ideas and traditions with the new ones of the west. His, two novels, Athawar House and 'Chronicles of Kedaram' are about a small self-sufficient district town in south India which has to bear the onslaughts of the modern ideas. In Athawar House (1937), according to Naik:

The action, spread over almost a generation, covers the economic vicissitudes in the life of the joint family, the ferment of the Gandhian age, the stresses and strains of complex family relationships and the inevitable clash between orthodoxy and new ideas. An authentic picture, drawn with great understanding and sympathy, of a social phenomenon now fast vanishing from the Indian scene, this joint family chronicle is one of the best of its kind in Indian English fiction.<sup>18</sup>

This clash between the East and the West is also evident in his later novel, 'Chronicles of Kedaram'

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18. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.154.

(1961). In this novel "there is the clash between the Old and the New : there is the conflict between Britain and India..."<sup>19</sup>

So we see that Krishnaswamy Nagarajan with the help of his novels shows how reform and new ideas stealthily encroach upon a quiet and conservative society.

In a somewhat similar manner is Mulk Raj Anand's sensibility touched. He was born at Peshawar, educated at Lahore, London and Cambridge. But we find that Mulk Raj Anand was thoroughly dissatisfied with the western kind of education he received. In his autobiographical novel , 'Apology for Heroism' (1946) he has said,

I grew up like most of my contemporaries, a very superficial, ill-educated young man, without any bearings.<sup>20</sup>

However, Mulk Raj Anand seemed to have got over this 'superficial'-ness and identified himself

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19. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.286.

20. Mulk Raj Anand, Apology for Heroism (Bombay, 1946) , p.15.

thoroughly with the ethos of the Punjabi society of his hometown. He loved the old and the traditional which was fast vanishing and being overtaken by the modern west. This he could understand all the more better as his own family had suffered due to the encroachment of modern machinery upon the old craft and occupations. His father was a coppersmith who was forced out of his business and made to join the army for a living. Anand had seen his world breaking up:

... with the advance of modern science and technology, and the invasion of mass - produced articles, the traditional village craftsmen are fast losing their occupations, and are obliged to migrate to the city to obtain regular employment, and even to brave the perils of army life as an adventurous and lucrative career.<sup>21</sup>

But its not that Mulk Raj Anand is wholly absorbed in the beauties of his fast slipping world. In all his novels he sternly criticises the bad traditions and customs of the orthodox society. He,

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21. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.331.



infact, is able to interpret "Indian material in terms of a new universalism and combines all that is best in both East and West."<sup>22</sup> Mulk Raj Anand evolved for himself a "comprehensive historical humanism" through the fusion of the thoughts of the East and the West.<sup>23</sup> Such use of both the cultures has resulted in the rich kind of literature which is universal, yet not alien to the Indian ethos. Writing on a similar subject. Jack Lindsay opines :

His European view gave him strong sense of the general contours of human conflicts and revolutions; his Indian sensibility enabled him to express this general scheme of movement without losing his wholehearted sympathy with people as they were people with a long rich tradition.<sup>24</sup>

His novel, 'Untouchable' (1935) describes the life of the 'low caste in India and its protagonist Bakha, a young sweeper who is frustrated by his inability to

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22. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment, Bareilly, Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p.149.

23. M.R.Anand, Contemporary Indian Literature, "How I Became A Writer" (Article), Nov.-Dec.,1965, p.15.

24. Jack Lindsay, Mulk Raj Anand, p.8.

improve his lot, sees a silver lining only when he hears of mechanised sanitation. In 'Coolie' (1936), an orphaned village boy from the Kangra hills, is buffeted by storms of mechanisation, industrialisation and colonisation. 'Two Leaves and a Bud' (1937) is a story about western exploiters and the exploited Indian masses. "The telling realism of the book brought him in conflict with the ruling class who did not like to have the skeletons in their cupboard dragged out to public gaze."<sup>25</sup> The trilogy - The Village (1939), Across the Black Waters (1941) and The Sword and the Sickle (1942) - tells about the life of Lalu Singh, a resident of a typical village, called Nandpur. Lalu Singh rebels against his village and its mores and finally runs away to join the army. 'The Big Heart' (1945) deals with the problem of the displacement of the coppersmiths by factories. In the end it is the machine that wins over man.

Naik observes about Anand :

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25. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment, Bareilly, Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p. 168.

Anand's fiction has been shaped by what he himself calls "the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of my Indian past." To his Indian past, however, Anand's attitude is ambivalent. On the one hand, he is indignantly critical of the deadwood of the hoary Indian tradition - its obscurantism and fossilization; on the other, as his life long interest in ancient Indian art and the intuitive understanding of the Indian peasant mind in his writings indicate, he is equally aware of its finer and enduring aspects as well. And it is mainly from the European tradition that Anand derives his fervent socialist faith and his vision of a modern egalitarian society.<sup>26</sup>

Rekha Jha's point further strengthens this view that

He is, because of his western education, convinced of man's power to master nature

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26. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.155.

through a rational technology; so while the old in his novels sit manuring their fate, the young look forward to a more perfectible world in the future.<sup>27</sup>

Unlike other writers of his period, R.K.Narayan was least affected by the conflict arising from east-west encounter. His novels are all centred round a quiet . old village of Malgudi whose soul remains unchanged inspite of the various superficial physical changes taking place in it. 'Swami and Friends' (1935) 'Bachelor of Arts' (1936), 'The English Teacher', 'The Dark Room' (1938) are all novels focussing on the happy life style of the inhabitants of Malgudi. In Malgudi modernization is gradually introduced in the form of Palace Talkies, motor cars etc. These changes do not really affect the general ethos of the village. But in the post-war period, R.K.Narayan's Malgudi becomes crowded with 'outside' characters that can be associated with modernity. Financiers, speculators, adventure, eccentrics, cranks and cinema stars fan the innocence out of Malgudi in his last group of novels -

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27. Rekha Jha, The Novels of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Prestige Books 1990, p.10.

'Mr. Sampath' (1949), 'The Financial Expert' (1952), 'The Guide' (1958) and 'The Vendor'.

As Iyengar puts:

Malgudi is madly fanning out; there is talk of a new bridge across the Saraya (in addition to the railway bridge), a studio on the other side of the river and an aggressive weekly paper; and the pressure of 'outside' men, ideas and money is continuous and irresistible : where, then is the placid Malgudi of Swami and Friends? Innocence has given place to experience: the nuances of humanity are lost in the rattle of civilization : the imperatives of tradition are exceeded by the impact of change and stability and certainty are no more.<sup>28</sup>

The Vendor of Sweets, a light novel, also shows this encroachment of modernism upon the quiet life of Malgudi. P.P.Mehta also observes this process of displacement:

Thus Narayan has given one more glimpse in the

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28. K.R.S.Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi; Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.373.

simple life of Malgudi, and put before us a simple honest vendor of sweets who does not understand the mechanism of the dishonest commercial world of foreign collaborations. Narayan's Malgudi is perhaps fast changing and people like Jagan, Margayya and others are fast disappearing from society, and even lovable rogues like Raju and Sampath look honest before the heartless commercial modern men of today. But the old charm of Malgudi still lingers over Jagan and his sweets - sampling cousin and his labours of love - a race of men who are being fast swept aside by sheer selfish modernity.<sup>29</sup>

Raja Rao of Mysore left India for France in 1929 to do research on mysticism of the West. He later moved to the U.S.A. His fifty years of 'exile' from his motherland made him even more aware of its spiritual mysteries and its culture. "In Raja Rao, the East-West theme assumes a depth and validity in the quintessence of the advaita philosophy of Brahmanical India, to the the exclusion of India at all other

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29. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment Bareilly : Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p.257.

levels. The West is seen as insisting on the particular, the concrete, the personal and the immediate in its recognition of the object as something outside oneself."<sup>30</sup> This sensitiveness is suggested in his novel, The Serpant and the Rope, through its hero, Ramaswamy, who represents the author and therefore utters his thoughts. Iyengar observes :

It is clear that Rama's four years' stay in Europe has helped him to realise in his heart of hearts what India - with Himavanta and Ganga in the North and Kaveri and Kumari in the South - really means to him. Whether in or out of India, he is of India, the Mother's son and nothing can alter the fact.<sup>31</sup>

In the novel Ramaswamy is caught between the western and the eastern cultures in the same way as the author. He does not know which is better. In trying to bring the two cultures together in a harmonised manner Ramaswamy married a French girl called Madeleine. But gradually he came to realise that they could never get

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30. Rekha Jha, The Novels of Kamala Markandeya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1990, p.10.

31. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.400.

along with each other as the difference between the two cultures was very great. Both had absolutely different concepts of love, marriage and family. Praising the book Iyengar says:

Never before has the subtle and tortuous mind of the cultivated Indian who is caught in the narrows of the ambiguous agonizing present - the junction of the old and the new, the East and the West - been presented so engagingly and excitingly in a work of fiction.<sup>32</sup>

The novels of Raja Rao present the different stages of his spiritual development and his growing affinity with the eastern culture. In his first novel, Kanthapura (1938) the author is just trying to find his moorings in the traditional India. He even tries to develop a unique style and form which had its own Indian dialect and which might in the course of time become a peculiarity of Indian English Literature.

On the form of the novel, Kanthapura, Harish Raizada observes:

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32. Ibid., p.405.



Thus while using the old technique of the ancient myths and legends, Raja Rao makes use of the innovations in the style of Conrad, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf to suit the narrator's rambling and reminiscing speed. For conveying the tempo of the nightmarish and fast moving episodes, he has evolved a racy rhythmic style with long and interminable sentences connected with numerous 'ands' and containing few punctuation marks.<sup>33</sup>

His second novel, The Serpant and the Rope (1960) discusses about the values of the two cultures regarding sex, marriage, society, religion, learning and death. By the end of the novel the protagonist is able to free himself from the mire of all types of customs, values etc. that make the world a difficult place to live in, and finds peace at the feet of his guru.

Although in the end Raja Rao makes Ramaswamy transcend all cultural differences, yet throughout he tries to bring "about a beautiful and harmonious fusion

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33. Dr. Harish Raizada, The Lotus and the Rose: Indian Fiction in English (1850-1947), Aligarh: The Arts Faculty, Aligarh Muslim University, 1978, p.203.

of the intellectual essence of the West and the East"<sup>34</sup> while symbolising illusion and reality in the novel.

The novelist has tried to blend even the Indian and Western modes in the form of the novel in his effort to bring the two cultures together. Naik comments that :

The inspiration of the novel partly came from Rilke's The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge, and another western parallel is the novel of spiritual quest pater's Maruis the Epicurean, for instance. The autobiographical method of narration is a characteristically modern western fictional technique. Typical Indian elements are the essentially 'puranic' structure of the novel, blending story, philosophy and religion, the interspersing of the narrative with verses as in the sanskrit form, 'campu', and pithy dialogue on philosophical question's as in the Upanishads. The novel also tries to graft some features of the rhythms of Sanskrit speech on English; to the style frequently sonorous,

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34. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction : An Assessment, Bareilly, Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p.215.

repetitive and swift has an unmistakably Indian colouring which is further deepened by the use, as in Kanthapura, of bold importations from Indian speech into English.<sup>35</sup>

Leave alone the form of The Serpant and the Rope, its story also hints at an encounter of the East and West. There are a number of Western characters whose lives are closely linked with the Indian ones. P.P. Mehta, while assessing the novel makes an observation regarding this aspect:

Here the full implications of the meeting of East and West are described on the most intimate plane by Rama, a young Indian, and his story moves through India, France and England at the time of the Queen's Coronation. Madeleine, his French wife, seeks a human answer to her problems, which she ultimately finds in personal equation of Catholicism and Buddhism; for Rama a solution is not so easy, but eventually he realises that he must take the final leap into reality, and search for a Teacher, his 'Guru'.<sup>36</sup>

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35. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademy, 1982, pp.169-170.

36.. P.P.Mehta, Indo-Anglian Fiction An Assessment, Bareilly, Prakash Book Depot, 1979, p.214.

The next novel of Raja Rao, The Cat and Shakespeare (1965) shows that the novelist has completely merged himself with the Indian culture of 'faith' and 'surrender'. He has completely grown out of his logical pattern of western thought . But he has not yet dropped the idea of harmonising the two cultures. His style in the novel has been described as a mixture of 'The Vikar of Wakefield and Shakespeare', but his thoughts, as we know were completely of the East.

Comrade Kirillov (1976), his next novel, also treats of the East-West conflict theme while revealing the relationship between Padmanabhan Iyer and Irene.

Iyer is torn between "orthodoxy and modernism, Gandhism and communism, inner certitude and outer frenzy"<sup>37</sup>. On the surface he pretends to be a Communist and rejects Indian values, but essentially he is, as Irene sees him, an "inveterate Indian". In all his novels, according to Iyengar:

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37. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 739.

... Raja Rao's deeper intention seems to be to show that, for an Indian, 'holy wedded love' is impossible with a European wife however unexceptionable otherwise; and again, an Indian attempt to forge a life of fulfilment outside the motherland is doomed to failure, whatever the other attractions and inducements of the adopted country.<sup>38</sup>

Thus Raja Rao repeatedly points out in his novels that an Indian cannot but be an Indian. He might be way led by other cultures, but in the end he has to return to the Indian fold. Dr. O.P.Mathur wrote in an article about Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope and Comrade Kirillov:

What finally emerges with unmistakable force from both the novels is the strength and resilience of Hindu culture and 'Sanskara' as against the mundane life of the West which is focussed on the visible and the concrete ever in a state of flux. Just as no man can walk except in his own shadow, no Hindu can completely leave

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38. Ibid., p. 739.

the orbit of his traditional culture and philosophy. .... The Indian strain is so persistent that it can never die.<sup>39</sup>

Not withstanding his small output, Raja Rao has made a position for himself as the most 'Indian' of all other Indian English novelists and as Naik puts it" as probably the finest painter of the East-West confrontation."<sup>40</sup>

Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh and the women novelists, such as Ruth P. Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sehgal and Anita Desai are a few important writers that flourished in the post-Independence era. The novelists of this period also, like the pre-Independence novelists, deal with social realism.

Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906-- ) most of the time tries to bring about a synthesis of East and West. In his novels, says Rekha Jha:

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39. Dr.O.P.Mathur, Article published in New Literature Review, No.4, 1978.

40. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.173.

... the East - West is viewed against "the frail old-world wheel of wood set against the giant machines of the modern age". His novels aim at fulfilling the hopes and quests of Gandhi and Rabindra Nath Tagore in the "integration of the simple and the sophisticated; the ancient and the modern city and the village; East and West."<sup>41</sup>

His novel, the Music for Mohini (1952), is a good example of this attempt of synthesising the East and the West, the old and the new, the city and the country and the 'horoscope' and the 'microscope' through his characters and the situations in which they are placed.

Two such characters are Rooplekha and Mohini. They present two contrasting situations in the novel. While Mohini is 'city-bred' and 'village wed', Rooplekha is 'village-bred' and 'city-wed'. She once explains to Mohini the "real purpose" of this interchange of brides. She said that with this

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41. Rekha Jha, The Novels of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Jhabvala, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1990, p.10.

interchange the bride bridges the "old Eastern view of life" with the "new semi-western outlook".

But Mohini finds it very difficult to bridge this gulf particularly due to the extreme superstitious faith of her mother-in-law. At first she detested her, but gradually she began to understand the old world which was not really 'bad', only 'misguided'; "perhaps she (the mother-in-law) saw the wrong side of this old tapestry of tradition and missed the design."

Mohini's husband, Jayadev, is shown to be a person who had synthesised the two cultures in a healthy manner and tried to help others do the same. He was very disturbed by the superstitious manner of working of his mother. Jayadev remorse over the misguided faith that was fast enveloping the society of India and taking the place of the ancient quest for "Truth, Goodness and Beauty." In the end it is Jayadav's reason which scores over 'misguided faith'.

A Dream in Hawaii (1978) is another novel which again deals with East-West conflict. Here the



encounter of the two cultures proved to be "abortive, because while the East with all its spirituality has not yet completely mastered the flesh, the West continues to remain commercialised and confused."<sup>42</sup>

So Many Hungers is a novel about the effects of the second world war on the simple people of Bengal. As a result "the life of town as well as of village, deviates from its traditional grooves and undergoes sudden and far reaching changes. The crisis of Europe over-takes Bengal and disrupts its moral life."<sup>43</sup>

Manohar Malgonkar (1913--) wrote a number of novels, most of which deal with the period just before and immediately after the partition of India. His novels - Distant Drum, The Princes, and A Bend in the Ganges deal with the different aspects of the various problems arising due to Independence and partition. Only Combat of Shadows has a majority of English characters with its scenes revolving round a Tea estate. In fact, the protagonist of the novel is also English.

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42. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.216.

43. Dr. Harish Raizada, op. cit., p.195.

Another writer with strong predilections for presenting East-West encounter and conflict in his novels is Balachandran Rajan (1920 - ) "The subject discussed in his first novel, The Dark Dancer (1959)". " is the clash of cultures resulting in compromises"<sup>44</sup>. It tells about a youth called Krishnan who has come back to India after spending about ten years in England. He is just trying to adjust himself to his environment, when his Cambridge friend, Cynthia arrives'. Although Krishnan is married to Kamala he falls in love with Cynthia and begins to live with her, at the same time abandoning Kamala who represents the eastern culture. Thus Krishnan is again shut out from the East and its traditional culture which he was avidly trying to imbibe. His effort to adjust to the East and then his suddenly being swept off his feet by the western values on seeing Cynthia show that he had to struggle hard to grow out of the easy and superficial values of the west to be fully open to the subtle and spiritual influences of the East. After meeting Cynthia, Krishnan loses his way in the mesh of Western culture. He realises this only when his gift to the deity is refused as he and Cynthia

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44. P.P.Mehta, Op.cit., p. 356.

are not man and wife. After this incident he goes back to his wife and the Eastern culture, and remains faithful to her even after her tragic death. In this way he overcomes the conflict in his mind that had arisen when he had come into contact with both the cultures.

Too Long in the West is also about a foreign-returned Indian trying to find her place in the East. It is a parody of the ancient Hindu culture of 'Svayamvara' to find an Indian husband for the Columbia-educated Nalini.

In both the novels the foreign-returned protagonists, although wanting to merge in the East, cannot leave behind their superficial layers of Western culture at once. They drag the west along with them to the east which results in a confusion of values:

In The Dark Dancer, Cambridge pursues Krishnan to India in the seductive shape of Cynthia who calls him 'Krish'; in Too Long, Columbia appears suddenly in Mudalur as Earnest the anti-malaria expert, and he calls Nalini 'Nelly' to her

mother's disgust.<sup>45</sup>

Sudhindra Nath Ghose (1899-1965) used his novels to castigate the Indians who have been educated in the Western way and have, as a result, forgotten their own heritage and culture. To him 'common people' with an instinctive knowledge and love for Indian myths and cults are better than those men who have cultivated themselves with foreign education. Balram, the protagonist of the novel, The Flame of the Forest, makes a comparison between the two types of people. He says that the uneducated are better off as they have no feeling of inferiority which Calcutta's 'cultivated people' have. This feeling of inferiority in them grows from a comparison which they tend to make of Indian material progress with the progress of the nations of the West. On the other hand, the uneducated is happy and satisfied with whatever little knowledge he has of the lore, legends and history of his own country.

Thus, the writer, through Balram conveys the message that being educated in the western manner and

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45. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.510.

being uprooted from ones own culture is the most insufficient and incomplete kind of education one can get. Balram was also educated in the modern manner. The novelist completed his real education by making him recover his lost heritage in the course of the novel.

S.N.Ghose as well as G.V.Desani, both have mixed western with oriental form of fiction writing. In The Vermillion Boat of S.N.Ghose the narrator is a student who is a 'bengali variation of James Joyce's Stephan Dedalus',<sup>46</sup>. Govindas Vishnoo Das Desani (1909 --) has blended the western and Indian narrative techniques very perfectly in his novel, All About Hatterr: (1948, revised edition 1972):

The autobiographical narration is typically Western, and so the surrealistic technique of characterisation in which all the seven sages ultimately resolve themselves into the Pseudo-sage, and their various disciples into Hatterr himself, of whom Banerrji, is in a sense the alter ego. At the same time, there is so much of the Pancatantra and the Hitopadesa, the

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46. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.481.

Upanishada and the Puranas in the novel, while the presentation of each encounter under the three stages called 'Instruction', 'Presumption' and 'Life - encounter' is reminiscent of the structure of the Nyaya syllogism... Both the emboxed technique of story - telling and the emphasis on a viable philosophy of living in the world recall the Pancatantra in which also appearance versus reality, deception, and 'diamond cut diamond' are recurring themes. The dialogues between sage and disciple read like a parody of the Upanishada and the vast range of reference to diverse subjects is a typical Puranic characteristic.<sup>47</sup>

Even the characters in the novel show a blending of East and West. The protagonist has a pseudonym 'Hindustani walla Hatterr'. Hatterr suggests a 'sahib' as all sahibs' wore 'topi' and were therefore called 'topiwallah' (which is also suggested by 'Hatterr') by the Indians. Mr. H. Hatterr was the son of a European seaman and had an oriental mother. In the novel he is

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47. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.228.

searching for a viable philosophy of living. Mr. H.Hatterr delves in both the Western and Eastern aims and the means of achieving status and respectability, but in the end he is dissatisfied with both the ways of living.

The novel also has a character called Banerrji. He is shown to be a typical Anglophile to the extent of even wishing to change his name from 'Nath' to 'Noel'. He is a great admirer of Shakespeare. G.V.Desani has made fun of such Anglophiles in the same manner as S.N.Ghose has made fun of the 'cultivated people'.

Arun Joshi (1939-- ) and Chaman Nahal (1927--) are the two novelists of the late sixties and seventies who present an East-West encounter in their novels. A. Joshi's "novels show his sympathy for the lone rebel against our sham civilization." His first novel, The Foreigner (1968) is about Sindi Oberoi who is dissatisfied with his International education and therefore is searching for his roots:

Sindi Oberoi... is a born 'foreigner' - a man alienated from all humanity. The only son of an Indian Father and an English mother, and born in Kenya, he is orphaned at an early age and grows

into a youth without family ties and without a country. 'My foreignness lay within me' he confesses. Educated in England and the U.S.A. , he sums up his life as 'twenty-five years largey wasted in search of wrong things in wrong places.'<sup>48</sup>

Sindi Oberoi was a man without roots. He remained a foreigner wherever he went. This was so because his foreignness was "of the soul and not of geography". It always brought crisis upon him and all those connected with him.

Chaman Nahal, in his novel, Into Another Dawn (1977) presents the beaten theme of cross-cultural conflict. The protagonist, belonging to an orthodox Brahmin family, elopes with an American, but on discovering that he suffers from an incurable disease, returns home to die in peace.

The women writers gained prominence and a place in the fictional world only after Independence. Of them, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala are the most

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48. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 230.



outstanding in their work as well as in their presentation of the East-West encounter and conflict.

Kamala Markandaya (Purnaiah Taylor, 1924 -- ) was brought up in India but settled in England. Her life itself was the meeting point of East and West, and this autobiographical element is very much present in all her novels:

The themes of uprootedness, racial tension and prejudice, and conflict between traditionalism and modernism, faith and reason have the unmistakable ring of the autobiographical, as we take into account that she was born and brought up in a tradition-ridden Brahmin family of South India and later on she went to England, fell in love with Mr. Taylor and marrying him, she settled there permanently as an expatriate. And living in England for years as an expatriate, she has experienced the sharp conflict between Eastern and Western values and also must have witnessed racialism.... The point to be noted in this regard is that Markandaya in most of her novels deliberately makes an English character fall for an Indian one or

occasionally vice versa - and this reflects nothing but a significant episode from her own, life and this episode which has become a strong obsession of Markandaya figures repeatedly in her novels in one form or another.<sup>49</sup>

Most of her novels have Indian settings which are, however, not truly representative because of her 'insider-outsider' perspective. But as stated earlier, the cross-cultural conflict is present in all her works - and in delineating that she remains very true to herself. According to M.K.Naik:

... East-West encounter takes two forms - first, a direct relationship between Indian and British characters; and secondly, the impact of the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule on traditional Indian life.<sup>50</sup>

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49. Madhusudan Prasad, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.XIV - XV.

50. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 236.

In her first novel , Nectar in a Sieve (1954), Kamala Markandaya has tried to portray the two forms of East-West encounter. First of all there is the tannery which is representative of a takeover by modern technology defeating all that which spelt tradition and stability. Then there is Dr.Kennington, affectionately called Kenny by the villagers. He works for them, loves them, but is unable to understand them. Once he says to Rukmini:

My God! I do not understand you. I never will,  
Go, before I too am entangled in your  
philosophies<sup>51</sup>

Harish Raizada points out :

Through their contact with the English medical missionary Dr. Kennington... the author brings out the opposite view-points of the simple and fatalistic creatures of the soil, who endure their miseries with calm resignation and the enlightened Englishman who has been nourished on the noble ideals of liberalism and has no

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51. Kamala Markandaya, Nectar in a Sieve, New York :  
Nal Penguin Inc., p.116.

patience with the passivity of the starving and suffering villagers for the amelioration of whose miseries he works indefatigably.<sup>52</sup>

In the novel, Some Inner Fury (1955) Kamala Markandaya has, attempted a multidimensional study of this East-West encounter. She has used the novel to portray three types of people that are born out of such a kind of encounter. Kit represents such a class of people who are overtaken by the western culture. For them the values of the west are the only cultured ones, their dress, their language - everything is superior and so they blindly ape the west. The second type is of Govind. Such people blindly hate whatever stinks of the West. They cannot decipher good from bad. Even the English missionary, Hickey, who is devoted to the Indians, is not accepted by the patriotic Indians. His school is burnt down and he himself almost lynched. Only Roshan, of the third type, is the best. Such a class always have a firm base of its own and so can take the good from both the cultures without being completely bowled over by any one of them. Only they

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52. Harish Raizada, "East West Confrontation in the Novel of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.38.

are capable of bringing about a healthy synthesis of the two cultures.

But according to Harish Raizada :

Both Kamala Markandaya and E.M.Forster... emphasize that intimate relationships between Indians and English could be possible only when India was free and both the races could meet together on an equal level.<sup>53</sup>

This was the reason why Kamala Markandaya split the friendship between Mira and Richard. They intended to marry until they were also 'caught in' the web of Quit India Movement and thus riven apart.

As A Silence of Desire (1960) has a post-Independence setting the East-West confrontation in it is on a cultural level and not on a political one as in Some Inner Fury.

There is a conflict of values between scientific and modern Dandekar and his traditional and

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53. Ibid., p. 46.

superstitious wife, Sarojini. She goes to a Swami, whom Dandekar distrusts, to seek faith cure for her tumour. There is also a conflict in the mind of Dandekar himself. He vacillates between violent trust and extreme mistrust of the Swami.

He could not make up his mind because heart spoke one way, head the other, and sometimes the two changed places.<sup>54</sup>

In Possession (1963) there is again a clash between eastern spiritualism and western materialism. "Just as Caroline" is a "typical representative of her race in pride, possessiveness, egoism and cunning manoeuvres so does Val never cease to be an Indian in his liberty, honesty and simplicity."<sup>55</sup> With these qualities and with the help of his inborn spiritualism he is able to bring the ethereal quality in his paintings which has been described by an American critic in the novel in these words:

This young painter paints as if unknown to himself he had glimpsed, beyond the horizon, the

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54. Kamala Markandaya, A Silence of Desire, London: Four square Books, 1966, p.144.

55. Harish Raizada, op.cit., p.56.

transcendent powers of the universe, and the refracted light brings a hint of the power and the menace into his own painting.<sup>56</sup>

In fact Val does not paint for an audience of this world, nor his subject is wordly. He paints only for his own satisfaction and pleasure and "his subject and audience alike is the divine spirit."<sup>57</sup>

Caroline cannot understand this attitude of Val and his friend , the Swamy. She "looks at his paintings merely as commodities to be bartered in the market"<sup>58</sup>. For her Val is just another status symbol to be shown off in her own country. He represents her taste,her fashion etc.But, as this extreme possession is through and through a Western value, Val, continuously aiming to free himself of it, is able to do so by the end of the novel. He finally goes back to his cave-retreat which is sheer 'wilderness' to Caroline.

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56. Kamala Markandaya, Possession, Bombay : Jaico Publishing House, 1984, p.164.

57. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. , 1987, p.444.

58. Dieter Riemenschider, "British Characters in Indo-English Fiction", M.K.Naik, ed. Aspects of Indian Writing in English, Delhi: The Macmillan Company of India Limited, 1979, p.146.

The novels, A Handful of Rice (1966) and Two Virgins(1973), both have protagonists that have been influenced by modern ideas and , therefore "revolt against their traditional environments and seek their fulfilment by carving their careers independently."<sup>59</sup> Ravi and Lalitha do not rely on the spiritual or leave everything on fate to decide as the others in the society do. These 'modern' protagonists are after material gain and so they are never satisfied with what little they possess.

The people of the two worlds East and West are full of hatred and become abusive to each other in The Coffor Dams (1969). Only Helen and Mackendrick try to understand the 'natives' to some extent . Moreover, there is a conflict between technological power of the West and the forces of nature of the east symbolised by the river, the jungle and the forbidding gorges of hills around.

... the novel as a whole is a deeply disturbing protest against the onslaught of modern technological ruthlessness against the simplicity and humanity of an earlier order of

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59. Harish Raizada, op.cit., p.50.



life.<sup>60</sup>

The situation in The Nowhere Man (1972) is absolutely unique. It deals with a person who has renounced his motherland and adopted England as his home. However, the young, unemployed youth of England do not think in the same manner and vent their anger on such immigrants. They cannot accept Srinivas as one of them and thus make him realise the hard fact that in reality he has no place under the sun which he can call as his 'home'. He has forsaken his motherland and adopted a country which still regards him as an alien after his residence in it for so many years. He has infact, become a 'nowhere man'. In this novel K. Markandaya "builds a dream world out of the fabric of an elderly Indian's loneliness - nowhere-ness - in London". P.P.Mehta says that "...a sort of Eastern wisdom encompasses the entire atmosphere of this novel..."<sup>61</sup>

Her next novel, Two Virgins (1974) is a tale of two sisters - one influenced by the urban culture that is fast taking on Western style of living, and the other entrenched in the traditional way of living at

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60. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.449.

61. P.P.Mehta, op.cit., p.308.

the village. Lalitha, the sister who is faced with the Western culture, experiences a lot of conflict in her mind when she has to choose between the old Indian values and the new Western ones.

Talking about The Golden Honeycomb (1977) M.K.Naik says that "the ghosts of Faulkner and James still continue to haunt the style."<sup>62</sup> Thus her style also represents the encounter which is all the time occurring in her novels. In the novel Rabi, a scion of the rulers of Devapur, has a liberal mind and rebels against the old traditions. He 'rejects his princely destiny', befriends Janaki the gardener's daughter, and leads the people's protest.<sup>63</sup>

Markandaya's last novel, The Pleasure City (1982) again puts before us a conflict of nature, representing the East with Industrialisation, representing the West. Moreover, there is an attempt on the part of the writer to resolve the conflict.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala (1927 --) is born of Polish parents in Germany, educated in England and married in

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62. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.239.

63. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.742.

India. She lived in India for more than twenty-four years, but could not take to it wholly even after staying for such a long time. She maintained her outsider's perspective while observing the ways of Indian society and East-West conflict is present in practically all her novels. Shahane says:

The interaction between two cultures, European and Indian, is Jhabvala's special theme. In fact, it is her forte since it is in this area that her personal experience in India is transformed into art.<sup>64</sup>

Her characters are both Western and Indian. Mostly they marry or propose to marry but break off very soon as they do not find themselves to be comfortable in the alien culture of their partners. Gulab feels stifled in Esmond's house and Esmond also tries to stay away from his house and Gulab as much as he can. He hates Gulab's scents and spicy food:

The experience of European women married to Indians or of Indian women married to Europeans

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64. Vasant A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p.21.

who are confronted with this inevitable situation of the Hindu joint families is sharply presented in her fiction.... This is not merely a minor question of social manners or surface formalities, but one which highlights the difference between the individualistic European families and the socially close-knit Indian families.<sup>65</sup>

This is the social dimension of the theme of East-West encounter which is interwoven with the stories of all her novels. The other dimensions are cultural and spiritual. According to Shahane :

In the social context Indians and Europeans meet, fall in love, get married, and face either mutual dissonance or familial friction . In the cultural context they face the problems of adjustment of diverse backgrounds. Jhabvala is, of course, very much concerned with the problems of European men and women trying to get adjusted to Indian society and its mores. In the spiritual context she portrays Europeans who are

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65. Ibid., p.19.

fascinated by gurus, the torch bearers of Indian ancient spiritual heritage. The spiritual element in these gurus may be bizarre or genuine, yet the charm they hold for Europeans is unmistakable.<sup>66</sup>

All the dimensions, except the last one are present in Ruth P. Jhabvala's first novel, To Whom She Will (1955) . In this Amrita represents the pseudo-English culture which her family has adopted, and Hari represents the Indian culture.

He was delightfully unpractical, so truly Indian, so unworldly, that he could not think of hard set European things like time and clocks.... his smooth oiled hair- that seems endearingly Indian to Amrita, in contrast to the European ways which her own rich and more sophisticated family find so attractive.<sup>67</sup>

and

He was simple and unspoilt, and his ways the

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66. Ibid., p.31.

67 Ruth Praver Jhabvala, To Whom She Will, Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1985, p.21.

traditional, truly Indian ways which had been lost in her family.<sup>68</sup>

Both Hari and Amrita are attracted to each other, but are not throughout very comfortable in each others' presence. Finally they decide to break and lead their own different ways. Hari marries a homely and perfectly Indian, Sushila Anand with whom his family and even he himself feels more at home than with the convent educated Amrita who was independent in her thinking, worked and ate with knife and fork and spoke English. She also married in her own class and type i.e. with Krishna Sen Gupta who had the same values as Amrita's family.

Krishna Sen Gupta, who was a paying guest of Radha, Amrita's mother, represents a person with a dual character. The tussle between the two cultures can be witnessed in Krishna's person itself. While he admires English manners and thoughts, he himself prefers to be thoroughly Indian.

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68. Ibid., p.23.

In Nature of Passion (1956) 'Jhabvala's canvas is primarily familial though it includes many other related areas especially of a society which is involved in a state of change from an orthodox to a modern mode of living.<sup>69</sup> The 'Modern' of the society in the novel look up to the English for their manners, education, thoughts and taste. Nimmi, Lalaji's daughter, Viddi, his son and Kanta, his daughter-in-law are liberated in their thoughts and have to fight continuously with the 'backward' in the family and society. Nimmi pictures in the novel as a rebel. She does not mix with her own class. Her friend is Rajen Mathur. Who is not of her community and also goes to clubs, speaks English and dresses tastefully. She despises the girls of her college that are gaudily dressed, have not very refined manners and speak English badly. When Nimmi had her hair cut short, it was too much for the traditional ladies of the family. They blamed Lalaji for spoiling Nimmi by sending her to college and they began to hunt down a husband for her. But their anger knew no bounds when they got the news that Nimmi had broken all norms of their society as she had been making friends and spending evenings with a Parsi boy,

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69. Vasant A. Shahane, op.cit., p.50.

Pheroze Batliwala! However, in the end Nimmi had to give in. She was married off to a boy of her own community.

In Esmond in India (1958) there occurs a marriage between an Indian and a European. But because of difference in culture they face 'mutual dissonance' and ultimately their marriage breaks off. Esmond and Shakuntala also have a short affair as Betty and England overpower him in the end. The East-West encounter is also evident in the various 'modern' characters in the novel. Hardayal and Billimoria sister's blindly ape the west and consider everything Indians backward. They indulge only in superficial knowledge of Indian culture. Even Esmond who teaches about Indian culture, knows very little about the real India and its culture. Shahane's observations on such behaviour are :

Jhabvala exposes unrelentingly the pretentiousness of the so-called cultured and sophisticated classes in India who under the superficial impact of the West-either glorify or downgrade their heritage. She is also critical of the enthusiastic westerner who glories in a



shallow acquaintance with facets of Indian culture.<sup>70</sup>

In The Householder (1960) Jhabvala has used the East-West encounter as the basis of her irony. Here the Europeans are shown to be interested in Indian philosophy and Yoga while the Indian 'householder' knows nothing about it and is continuously worried about his salary, house rent etc. Jhabvala also uses the novel to show how different East is from the West as there is very little sympathetic understanding between them:

Prem and Hans, the east and the west, fail to communicate with each other almost everywhere.

A European lady at the party speaks to Prem, 'You may be Indian by birth but we are all Indian by conviction'. Hans joins them and appreciates the sentiment very much and then Prem says, "All through our long struggle for Independence, our conviction"

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70. Ibid., pp. 100-101.

"Don't drag politics into it!" Cries the lady.  
 "What does it matter, Independence or no  
 independence?"

Prem is scandalised by this remark because he  
 doesn't really realise its implications.<sup>71</sup>

Then there is also a Swami in the novel who is made the  
 butt of ironic comedy by Jhabvala. The writer says that  
 he "preaches Vedanta, the need to say, 'Yea' to the  
 call from within"<sup>72</sup>

In the novel the 'fake Indian Swamy' as well as  
 the European 'seekers of spirit' are satirized:

Hans and Kitty too are satirized effectively to  
 expose their superficial enthusiasm for eastern  
 philosophy and their high-sounding wordiness.  
 One of the reasons why Prem and Hans cannot  
 really communicate is that they are carried away  
 by words , words, words. Whereas Hans indulges

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71. Vasant A. Shahane, Op.Cit., p.68.

72. Ibid., pp. 68-69.

in philosophical, high sounding terms, Prem follows suit in using economic or political jargon. And since the two streams of jargon do not converge at any single point, they cannot establish any link of genuine communication.<sup>73</sup>

In Get Ready for Battle (1962) according to Shahane:

Jhabvala's satirical onslaught on Delhi's westernised high society is sharp and incisive and she demonstrates her great power as an artist in exposing the hollowness of this society.<sup>74</sup>

A Backward Place (1965) has many European characters, and all of them express their different attitudes towards India Dr. Hochstadt, who once thought that a synthesis of East and West was possible, confesses that, "life plays out to a different rhythm here... it is fatal to come to India and expect to be able to live to a Western rhythm."<sup>75</sup>

73. Ibid., p. 69.

74. Ibid., p. 109.

75. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A Backward Place, Delhi: Hind Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 1965, p.32.

Etta thinks India to be 'primitive' and backward and she simply cannot understand why Judy had resigned herself weekly to her marriage with Balin spite of all difficulties she has to face. She tells July:

Marriages, my dear, are made to be broken, that's one of the rules of modern civilization. Just because we happen to have landed ourselves in this primitive society, that's no reason why we should submit to their primitive morality.<sup>76</sup>

V.A. Shahane feels that this intrusion of the West into the East with all its materialistic values has transformed the Indian society for the worse. It has made the 'westernized Indians' very shallow and their manners very superficial and showy:

The induction or incursion of Europeans with their rational, scientific, materialistic heritage into the urban segment of India - Delhi creates a hybrid which shows the qualities of Western civilization in a rather poor

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76. Ibid., p. 5.

perspective. In fact , the Europeans inject into Indian society their own forms of coarseness, insensitivity, philistinism and the meaninglessness of contemporary civilization.<sup>77</sup>

However, the only redeeming character is that of the loving Judy and her relationship with Bal and other members of the joint family. 'She has adapted herself admirably into Bal's joint family and the heterogenous household.'<sup>78</sup> Clarissa says:

She's doing very nicely. She had the good sense to realise that the only way to live here was to turn herself into a real Indian wife.'<sup>79</sup>

In A New Dominion (1973) three girls of the West rebel against the 'machine-ridden society' of Europe and America and come to India to find spiritual contentment. Shahane says:

The theme can no longer be glibly summerised as 'east-west encounter', but rather, 'east-west get-together' or even Indo-European-American

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77. Vasant A. Shahane, op.cit., pp. 76-77.

78. Ibid., p.81.

79. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A Backward Place, Delhi: Hind Pocket Books(P) Ltd., 1965, p.25.

union'. India is no longer conceived in negative or pejorative terms, but rather in positive and adulatory terms - as an ancient country with a rich heritage of philosophical thought and spiritual insights, challenging, provoking, inviting and inspiring three eager-to-learn Western girls, Lee, Evie and Margaret. India is evocative, inspiring, fulfilling and frustrating and all this at the same time in this novel.<sup>80</sup>

Her next novel, Heat and Dust, tells about an English woman who, like other European women, detests the Indian weather. She keeps her "windows shut to keep out the heat and dust". But, in spite of all the precautions she takes one day she is blown off by a single draught of wind that enters her guarded life unawares. Olivia, the wife of the Assistant Collector of Satipur, causes a scandal when she has an affair with the Nawab of Khatm. The affair leads to Olivia's pregnancy and abortion. Later she has to be satisfied with the status of a mistress of the Nawab.

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80. Vasant A. Shahane, op.cit., p. 133.

Alternating this story of the past is the present story of the English narrator who comes to India to excavate this life story of her grand mother. In the meantime she has external relationship with an Englishman turned Hindu (Chidanand) as well as with an Indian, called Inder Lal. But her story acts as "merely a foil for the torrid; 'love story of the Nawab and Olivia'"<sup>81</sup>

After Heat and Dust Jhabvala shifted to the United States and with that her locale of the novels also shifted to New York. In Search of Love and Beauty has only a few events that take place in India. For the rest of the novel, the locale is New York. Here the Guru takes a central place and the whole story is about the phoney methods that he uses to exploit his Western disciples, especially the women.

The novel, Three Continents, is a truly international one. The story begins in New York, is continued in England and ends in India. Two innocent children, who are 'orphans of divorce' and quite discontented with life, are made the victims of the charlatan spiritual leaders of the East. They lose themselves and their property to the Rawul

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81. P.P.Mehta, op.cit., p.329.

and his group, who under the garb of spiritualism, carry on smuggling. In this way, by making the spiritual leaders represent India and the persons fighting against such charlaten gurus represent the West, Jhabvala has put forth the cross-cultural conflict very clearly before us.

Anita Desai's (1937 --) novels do not give much importance to the social background like those of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala.

Her forte, in other words, is the exploration of sensibility - the particular kind of modern Indian sensibility that is ill at ease among the barbarians and the philistines, the anarchists and amoralists.<sup>82</sup>

But Bye-Bye Blackbird (1971) "is the only novel of Anita Desai in which social and political realities take precedence over probing of the mind"<sup>83</sup>. The novel deals with Indians settled in England. The marriage of an Indian with a citizen of that country

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82. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 464.

83. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 241.



often contributes to complicate matters in the plot.

In this novel Desai presents a beautiful configuration of East-West encounter theme.

According to Iyengar, in the novel Bye-Bye Blackbird :

Anita Desai moves out of familiar Delhi and Calcutta, and vividly projects the prison - physical and psychological - in which the coloured immigrant in Britain is caught, both the difficulties of adjustment there and those of return to India.<sup>84</sup>

While discussing Bye-Bye Blackbird. In his book, Anita Desai : The Novelist, M. Prasad opines:

Although it is ostensibly concerned with the lives of Indian immigrants in England, it mainly explores the existentialist problems of

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84. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 470.

adjustment, belonging and ultimate decision in the lives of three major characters, Dev, Adit and Sarah.<sup>85</sup>

Dev, a Bengali youth, at first hates everything English - the English climate, the empty, silent streets and the tube railway. But gradually a slow change of attitude takes place:

He is perfectly aware of the schizophrenia that is infecting him like the disease to which all Indian's abroad, he declares, are prone.<sup>86</sup>

Thus while Dev gradually changes from a vehement Anglophobe to an ardent Anglophile, Adit's Anglophilia, in the course of time, changes into nostalgia and homesickness. He begins to have a feeling of being "a stranger, a non-belonger" in England. His favourite haunts now seem to be different and strange to him:

He visited all his favourite places and could recognise none of them. Then he went into all the pubs he had ever known, one by one, and in

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85. Madhusudan Prasad, Anita Desai : The Novelist, Allahabad: New Horizon, 1981, p. 47.

86. Anita Desai, Bye-Bye Blackbird, Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1971, p.19.

each was hunted out by the black sensation of not belonging.<sup>87</sup>

His English wife, Sarah has her own existential problems. She is constantly in search of truth and identity. Although she tries to adjust herself with her husband's life-style, She feels that there is some lack of sincerity in her efforts. In fact she feels that in trying to get something of both the cultures she has lost her own identity . Therefore she pines to "enter the real world - whether English or Indian, she did not care, she wanted only its sincerity, its truth."<sup>88</sup>

Santha Rama Rau's writings deal with East-West encounter . In her novel, Remember the House (1956) she has dealt with this theme and in the end reached a conclusion that the two cultures cannot commingle easily as they are poles apart in their essential nature. Also , a person born in one culture can never feel comfortable if he is forced to live in the other culture. The narrator heroine of the novel, Baba, "comes to feel that the West cannot easily mix with the

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87. Ibid., p. 205.

88. Ibid., p. 38.

East, and she sees too that traditional cultures have the hidden innate strength to stand shocks from the outside..."<sup>89</sup>

Iyengar says that "she explores and exposes ever so gently the dividing gulf between the East and the West."<sup>90</sup> While comparing Raja Rao's The Serpant and the Rope and Santha Rama Rau's Remember the House in relation to the cross-cultural conflict present in them. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

In each case the protagonist's awareness of two civilization's intensifies his concern with his own identity. They are all in search of their true image, torn between the traditional values they have absorbed from childhood and the new values their education has bestowed upon them. In each case, the novel ends with the resolution of their dilemma through a definite act of will.<sup>91</sup>

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89. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writings in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.472.

90. Ibid., p. 472.

91. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann Publishers (India) Pvt.Ltd., 1974, p.71.

In the novel The Girls from Overseas (1979), Nergis Dalal deals with the stock theme of East-West encounter, although it is not very well handled.

There are a few other writers in whose writings this east-west encounter figures prominently . Ruskin Bond, an Anglo-Indian, has written the book, The Room on the Roof (1956). It is "an evocative study of an observant Eurasian boy's reactions to the colourful Indian scene."<sup>92</sup> Ved Mehta's Delinquent Chacha (1967) is an "extravaganza set in England."<sup>93</sup> The novel is also "a satire on Indians who have madly gone foreign"<sup>94</sup> Bharati Mukherjee's Wife tells the story about a Bengali wife who, along with her husband, has settled in New York, but feels frustrated. The Tiger's Daughter, a second novel of the same author, also deals with the East-West encounter. A Brahmin girl, educated in U.S.A., marries an American but feels very dissatisfied. Finally she returns to India and

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92. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 245.

93. Ibid., p. 246.

94. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 517.

"rediscovers the culture of her people."<sup>95</sup>

Bharati Mukherjee's next novel Jasmine is a story of a village girl whose fate lands her in America. There she is transformed into a typical American-but only outwardly. At heart she remains the punjabi girl of the village, Hasnapur, who is bound to be guided by stars that the astrologer had predicted in her childhood and the star-like third eye imprinted on her forehead which made her peer out "into invisible worlds".

Jasmine had to go to America to fulfil her husband's ambition. But the passage to America and finally her landing there gradually corrode her Indian values and she is finally engulfed by America - although India does not stop haunting her. Her feelings about this change are :

It is by now only a passing wave of nausea, this response to the speed of transformation , the fluidity of American landscape. I feel at times like a stone hurtling through diaphanus

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95. Ibid., p. 757.

mist, unable to grab hold, unable to slow myself, yet unwilling to abandon the ride I'm on. Down and down I go, where I'll stop, God only knows.<sup>96</sup>

In two of the novels of M.V. Rama Sarma, The Stream (1956) and Look Homeward (1976), the cross-cultural conflict occurs. Iyengar says, "Look Homeward is yet another story revolving round the 'brain drain', and the Indian abroad is exhorted to go back to his country and serve the Mother."<sup>97</sup>

Victor Anant's The Revolving Man (1959) is "the story of a youth, symbolically named John Atma, who finds himself between two worlds - the Eastern and the Western"<sup>98</sup>.

Timera Murari's The Marriage (1973) has the same theme as that of The Nowhere Man of Kamala Markandaya. It tells about the identity crisis and the problems a

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96. Bharati Mukherjee, Jasmine, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990, pp. 138-139.

97. Ibid., p. 755.

98. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 246.

coloured immigrant has to face in U.K.

Moreover, Reginald and Jamila Massey's The Immigrants (1973) , Sasthi Brata's She and He (1973) Saros Cowasjee's Good bye to Elsa (1975) , A. Bhaskar Rao's The Secret (1975) and S.S.Dhami's Maluka (1978), Nayantara Sehgal's 'This Time of Morning-all the novels are "variations on the theme of East-West confrontation."<sup>99</sup>

The Immigrants, written by Reginald Massey and Jamila Massey, is a novel about Indians who have migrated to England in search of a better future. "The novel has its own realism and it touches the fringe of the problems that the Indians have to face in England to-day."<sup>100</sup>

Cross-cultural conflict figures also in the first novel of Nayantara Sahgal. A Time to be Happy has Sanad Shivpal as its protagonist. The hero's "main worry is that he cannot belong entirely to India. His rootlessness is the cause of his discontent". He

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99. Ibid., p.246.

100. P.P.Mehta, Op.cit., p. 330.



resolves the conflict by marrying the unsophisticated and a thoroughly Indian woman as well as by learning Hindi and spinning.

In most of the novels we can observe that the protagonist is basically an Indian but due to some circumstances he has been imbued with the Western culture because of which he begins to feel a kind of alienation from his own culture when he comes of age and when he can grasp the vast difference between the two ways of life. The most obvious difference which every Westerner feels is the joint family system of India. Regarding this Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

Thus the institution of the joint family is very conveniently used by the Indo-Anglian writer, in order to get a close view of the struggle between self and society. Society which is vague and amorphous becomes a concrete experience in the joint family.<sup>101</sup>

The Western attitude towards life in general, their attitude towards women, religion and philosophy

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101. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction : Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold - Heinemann Publishers (India) Pvt. Ltd., 1974, p.81.

are all different. The 'self' comes first in the Western value system whereas in the Indian system it comes the last. In every novel although the novelist tries his best to reach a 'golden mean'<sup>102</sup> he is never able to achieve it successfully and satisfactorily.

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102. Ibid., p. 83.

CHAPTER - IICROSS - CULTURAL CONFLICT IN THE NOVELS OFKAMALA MARKANDAYA

Kamala Markandaya was born in India in a traditional family of South India. She was brought up in this country but went for higher studies to England where she married Mr. Taylor and got settled as an expatriate.

While both R.P.Jhabvala and Markandaya are observers of Indian character and society, Markandaya's canvass is larger than that of Jhabvala and also there is a patriotic tinge in her narration of the stories. Like many of her literary predecessors e.g., R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, Markandaya too could be said to be "setting the record straight, at establishing a truer perspective than had so far existed on the nature of Indian character and society."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, all her novels have an autobiographical tinge in them. They reflect the

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1. Yasmin Goonaratne, 'Traditional Element in The Fiction of Kamala Markandaya, R.K.Narayan and Ruth Praver Jhabvala' in World Literature Written in English, Vol. 15 No.1, April, 1976, p.123.

cross-cultural conflict which goes on in the mind of Kamala Markandaya. Brought up according to Indian values she is suddenly exposed to western ones. This creates in her a problem of identity which in turn gives rise to her 'tragic vision'. The reason of this tragic vision is explained by M.Prasad:

And the fact that now she is married and settled in a country that once ruled over her own has not only kept alive her memories of racial discrimination and cruel oppression but, has also made her a victim of cultural schizophrenia- and this has obviously sharpened her tragic vision.<sup>2</sup>

All her feelings and emotions are conveyed to us through her characters and the predicaments in which they are placed. By helping her characters come out of their predicaments she tries to solve the different problems of society. This leads to the obvious fact that Kamala Markandaya is a novelist with a purpose in mind. All her novels are directed towards the amelioration of humanity as she feels that literature

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2. Madhusudan Prasad, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. XVI.

can play an important role in the development of society "through the work of writers who will lay bare the very anatomy of destruction and so force a halt"<sup>3</sup>. As she has a purpose, she must also be having her favourite themes which recur in all her novels. M.K.Naik has made some elucidations on this:

Markandaya's fiction evinces a much broader range and offers a greater variety of setting, character and effect though her quentessential themes are equally few-viz., the East-West encounter, and woman in different life-roles. The East-West encounter takes two forms-first, a direct relationship between Indian and British characters; and secondly, the impact of the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule on traditional Indian life.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, all her ten novels, Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury, Silence of Desire, Possession, A Handful of Rice, The Coffer Dams, The Nowhere Man, Two Virgins, The Golden Honeycomb and Pleasure City, have been written with a definite purpose and give a positive message. Uma Parameswaran

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3. Quoted by Margaret P. Joseph in Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, P.24.

4. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.236.

aptly sums up the message conveyed by Markandaya in her first five novels. She remarks:

The novels seem to say that if one's roots are injured or absent one dies. Nathan's roots are scarred when he is evicted from his land; he dies. But Rukmini's roots are in her children, and therefore she lives. Premala's roots are scorched when she is taken away from her traditional way of life and asked to be a society lady; she dies. Kit dies because he has no roots, he is only a vine clinging to the British Raj. But Govind's roots are deep in his native soil, and therefore nothing, not all violence of his hatred for the British, not all the disappointment over his unrequited love can destroy him. Sarojini's roots reach the very bowels of primitive pantheism and so she survives. Caroline is rooted in autocratic self-confidence and, like Scarlett O' Hara, feels that tomorrow she can regain what she lost today. Ravi, a transplanted villager, grows new roots but they are precariously shallow.<sup>5</sup>

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5. Uma Parameswaran, A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976. p. 91-92.

The next five novels also have somewhat similar messages to deliver. The Coffor Dams speaks against cultural dualism, The Nowhere Man against racial animosity, Two Virgins about suffering that an uprooted person undergoes, The Golden Honeycomb about the clash between Indian and British characters at the time of India's Independence struggle and the Pleasure City gives suggestion for a friendship between East and West. According to Naik:

Westernization, somehow, always appears in her novels to be the worst evil rampant in modern India. The ills of society are apportioned, as it were, to the neo-colonial adventure of the West in the East.<sup>6</sup>

But this effect of the West over the East is not described by Markandaya in a biased manner. Although she is patriotic she does not blame the West for all its actions. According to her the East should apply its descretionary power and imbibe the best that the West can offer. R.S.Singh has clearly laid down the purpose of Markandaya's writings:

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6. M.K.Naik, "Kamala Markandaya : An Overview," Perspective on Indian Fiction in English, (ed.), New Delhi : Abhinav Publication, 1985, p. 163.

On the whole Kamala Markandaya's attitude is patriotic. She thinks India should not sell her soul to the West. She should develop her own personality discarding outdated values and obsolete attitudes.... India should pursue her own path sticking to her long-cherished ideals while imbibing the best that the West can offer. Markandaya does not evince bitterness about English rule nor does she flatter the West uncritically. Her point of view is to a large extent unbiassed and balanced; her aim is to display how various attitudes and ideologies shaped the human destinies in the context of the British regime in India.<sup>7</sup>

Thus we see that in all her novels the essential theme round which the stories revolve is the cross-cultural conflict in its various aspects and dimensions.

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7. R.S.Singh, "Soulful East and Ratiocinative West", Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, p. 146.



(a) NECTAR IN A SIEVE

Meenakshi Mukherjee has pointed out that :

In the complex fabric of contemporary Indian civilization, the two most easily discerned strands are the indigenous Indian traditions and the imported European conceptions. Almost every educated Indian today is the product of the conflicts and reconciliations of two cultures, although the consciousness of this tension varies from individual to individual.<sup>8</sup>

But in Kamala Markandaya this problem occurs in a more aggravated form. She suffers from this tension more than the others as she is also settled among aliens, away from her roots. That is why this cross-cultural conflict occurs in most of her novels. The conflict is evident in the story and the characters of the novel as well as in Kamala Markandaya's style of writing.

Although her characters are said to have lacked a 'psychological plumbing' yet they have the importance

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8. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1974, p. 64.

of existing as symbols that convey the cross-cultural conflict. This idea is also brought out by Hari Mohan Prasad in his essay, "The Fictional Epic on Indian Life - A Study in Theme and Technique of Nectar in a Sieve" :

... her characters have largeness and an epical grandeur. They extend as symbols, as representatives of social groups or traditional types. Nathan and Rukmani are representatives of the uprooted peasants, Kenny of the finer tradition of the West, Thambi and Arjun of indentured labourers, Puli of the triumph of the rural world over the Urban.<sup>9</sup>

Rukmani can also be said to be a symbol of the East which is all emotion, tradition, suffering forbearance and above all a hope for a better future. In spite of her hopeless poverty, she continues to have faith in the future. It is only this attitude of hers that helps her to survive all disasters. All these attributes of the East are just beyond the comprehension of Kenny. Although he has lived in India

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9. Hari Mohan Prasad, "The Fictional Epic on Indian Life - A Study in Theme and Technique of 'Nectar in a Sieve,'" Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 102.

for a long time, worked for them, sympathised with them and helped them, he still cannot understand its people. The compromises they make and the sufferings they endure without uttering a word is unpalatable to him. He tries to make Rukmini understand :

... you must cry out if you want help. It is no use whatsoever to suffer in silence. Who will succour the drowning man if he does not clamour for his life?.... There is no grandeur in want - or in endurance.<sup>10</sup>

On another occasion he appealed :

Why do you not demand cry out for help - do something? There is nothing in this country. Oh God, there is nothing!<sup>11</sup>

But Rukmini, in heart of hearts, understood the grinding poverty and hunger which she had to live through with a light heart. She knew that there was no way out and bewailing it could not change anything.

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10. Kamala Markandaya, Nectar in a Sieve, New York : Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1954, p. 115.

11. Ibid., p. 48.

Only endurance could raise her spirit above her wants "for is not a man's spirit given to him to rise above his misfortunes?"<sup>12</sup>. A.V.Krishna Rao rightly observes:

The real truth of the novel is the spiritual stamina of Rukmini against such formidable enemies to her culture...<sup>13</sup>

It is Kenny who has to accept defeat and confess in the end that he did not understand the Indians. Moreover, he is bowled over by the simple concepts they have about life. His broken marriage, which he thinks to be a complex problem is so simply solved by Rukmini's instinctive common sense which she utters in the sentence, 'A woman's place is with her husband',<sup>14</sup>

Although the poverty described in the novel is depressing, yet every next line holds a hope in its bosom which keeps popping up from time to time to help the story move on with a jaunt. Even after the storm and flood of the previous night that had completely destroyed the village and the house of Kali she has some optimistic words to utter:

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12. Ibid., p.115.

13. A.V.Krishna Rao, 'Continuity and Change in the Novels of Makala Markandaya,' Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.5.

14. Kamala Markandaya, Nectar in a Sieve, New York, Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1954, p. 111.

At least it stood until the worst was over,  
and by God's grace we were all spared."<sup>15</sup>

Uma Parameswaran has some beautiful words to say about this particular attitude of the Indians:

Nectar in a Sieve is the story of the faceless peasant who stands silhouetted in the unending twilight of Indian agrarian bankruptcy, the horizon showing through the silent trees now with crimson gashes, now with soul - exalting splendour, always holding out the promise that the setting sun will rise again after the night, the night ever approaching yet never encompassing.<sup>16</sup>

When we think that all is finished for Rukmini, she still has her hope to live with as , according to Srinivasa Iyengar, "the heart that is tempered in the flames of love and faith, of suffering and sacrifice, will not easily accept defeat."<sup>17</sup> Rukmini returns to her roots and her children, with an added member Puli and begins life afresh with full zest. Iyengar has beautifully explained this liveliness of hers:

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15. Ibid., p 45.

16. Uma Parameswaran, A Study of Representative Indo- English Novelists, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976, p.92.

17. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987, p.438.

Calm after storm, spring after winter - such is the unending cycle . One must hope, and one must persevere even if one is engaged only in trying to discover "nectar in a sieve"!<sup>18</sup>

However, Rukmini was never sanguine about the future towards which the setting of the tannery was leading the quiet villagers and their families. R.S.Singh comments that, "Nectar in a Sieve (1954) is more than Rukmini's autobiography : it is also, by implication the story of the modernization of Indian villages."<sup>19</sup> The tannery was taken to be the approach by modernism which was opposed tooth and nail by the traditionlists. She felt that the tannery would one day heartlessly destroy her virgin village. The "slow, calm beauty" of the village would "wilt in the blast from town"<sup>20</sup> Rukmini could already sense that the birds had stopped singing. The peace of the night was destroyed by the construction work going on in the heart of the village. Tannery was one thing which she could not endure silently and so kept opposing first its construction that would turn all from 'tilling to

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18. Ibid., p. 439.

19. R.S.Singh, Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, p. 138.

20. Kamala Markandaya, Nectar in a Sieve, New York : Harper and Row Publishers, 1954, p. 66.

barter', then her sons' employment in it and then her sons' demand for more money from their employers. She was against the whole culture that the tannery forbode. Rukmini kept trying to dissuade her sons from joining the tannery by saying that they did not belong to the caste of tanners, but had to surrender to their superior logic which has been symbolically linked with the influence of the tannery. For her sons money was the only important thing. They could go on strikes for it. All this could not be understood by Nathan and Rukmini. They could feel the gap of understanding between them and their sons who seemed now to be like 'strangers'. The tannery was also responsible for the gradual break-up of Rukmini's traditional well-knit family. Two of her sons, Arjun and Thumbi, went to Ceylon in search of more and more money Raja was killed by the guard of the tannery. Murugan went to the town in search for a job. No one wanted to help Nathan till his field. Flood and later drought robbed Nathan of it and he and Rukmini had to move to the town. This broke them up completely. They could suffer all hardships in their own village and still survive, but the cruel urban life, with no morals or tradition proved to be too much for them. The only comfort they found was in the leper boy, Puli. They accepted what the city had rejected. Puli can be said to be a symbol of humanity.

He helped Rukmini and Nathan when they needed him most. It were they who recognised this quality in him and were full of gratitude towards him. These finer feelings got no recognition in the busy urban life. Though themselves uprooted, Rukmini and Nathan readily agreed to nourish the new, deformed shoot of the society.

The other type of cross-cultural conflict is evident in Kamala Markandaya's style of writing and her ideas about the society of India. Sometimes we feel that she gets confused between the Eastern and the Western values as is the case with the description of the village-life and the birth of Ira's child. M.K. Naik points out:

Those who know the Indian village will, however, not fail to notice how contrived picture of rustic life it offers. And when the novelist proceeds to describe the public naming ceremony of Ira's child which is born in sin, one is convinced that Rukmini's village exists only in the expatriate imagination of her creator. Surely, no traditional Indian village will allow so permissive a code of sexual morality.<sup>21</sup>

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21. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 236.



Even Shayamala Venkateswaran is of the same view:

...an Indian who knows even a little about village life in the country finds it difficult to believe many things in the novel.<sup>22</sup>

Since when have the villagers become so broad-minded that prostitutes and their children are not ostracized? Moreover, what village woman can so intelligently narrate her story as Rukmini does? All these points have been included by Markandaya, I feel, not without an intention. She must have known that a novel written in English will not have as much large a readership in India than it can have in the West. That is why she tries to borrow a few of the Western morals in a most subtle manner. If this would not have been the reason then she would not have contrived such a situation in which an albino child is born to Ira without creating much sensation in the village, as if it were an every day affair. Ordinarily, in such a colosely knit society as in an Indian village this would have been a much talked about topic. But because the novel was meant for Western readers Markandaya does not make a fuss of the illegitimate child so as not to

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22. Shyamala Venkateswaran, 'The Language of Kamala Markandaya's Novels', The Literacy Criterion, No.3 (Winder 1970), p.60.

seem to be very Victorian. In this way she avoids a serious conflict that this illegitimate relationship between the East and the West ought to have given rise to.

Another explanation of this incident could be that Markandaya, striving to be true to her nature as a novelist with a purpose, is trying her best to make a workable compromise between the East and the West come about. She infact even seems to have been on the verge of success when she very cleverly lets the birth of Kenny and Ira's child take place. But all her efforts could bear no fruit as some knowingly, and the others, unknowingly, and still others innocently refused to give recognition or, rather chose to be indifferent to the compromise Markandaya hinted at and attempted to bring about.

So, Markandaya ends the novel without a solution of the cross-cultural conflict but with a message that only those persons can be perfectly happy who despite all circumstances can remain in their elements and do not run after superficialities of life.

(b) SOME INNER FURY

A.V.Krishna Rao has discussed about the central idea present in the novel, Some Inner Fury :

The central ideas in Nectar in a Sieve and Some Inner Fury are respectively the havoc of economics and politics in the lives of individuals as well as communities : the pathetic domestic dislocation , resulting in the vast disorientation of values in the modern set-up of a village, and the violent disturbance of the unreal existence of a rootless upper class in a cosmopolitan centre of civilisation as a sequel to the furious political agitation in the country.<sup>23</sup>

In this novel Kamala Markandaya lets loose her imagination which wanders through the maze created by the collision of the two diametrically opposed cultures of the East and West . In this connection Iyengar's views are :

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23. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.7.

Like her earlier novel, this too is cast in the autobiographical form and exploits the freedom of reverie.<sup>24</sup>

As Kamala Markandaya's mind is full of conflicts arising from her own experiences, her novels are also full of such conflicts. This novel deals with two aspects of such a confrontation about which Harish Raizada has given an exposition:

The author highlights in the novel two prominent aspects of India's confrontation with Britain - the impact of the Western education and civilization on the outlook of Indians and the conflict between India and Britain arising from the latter's political dominance over the former.<sup>25</sup>

M.K.Naik has narrowed down the two aspects pointed out by H. Raizada. He has very specifically told about the result of the two types of confrontations:

... the love of Mira for Richard is denied

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24. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1987, p. 439.

25. Harish Raizada, 'East West Confrontation in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya,' Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan

fruition by the fury of the freedom movement which tears the lovers apart. The unhappy marriage of Kitsamy, the England - returned Civil Servant and Premala, his traditional Hindu wife, shows another facet of the East West relationship.<sup>26</sup>

The English educated Kit and Mirabai have developed a different wave length from that of the orthodox Indians of the older generation who keeps hindering all the enthusiastic plans of the younger generation. Mira's mother cannot reconcile herself with the idea of Mira marrying an Englishman . She works out plans to keep the two separated from each other. She also does not fail to admonish Mirabai for mixing freely with young men. I think it is the most ridiculous statement coming from a mother who has let her children get an education which taught them to be open minded. Such is the predicament of all families where there is an effort to create a mixture of the two cultures. The result is that they often fall between the two stools. Mira was brought up in a very westernized atmosphere. And now when she begins acting upon the values she has been brought up on, her

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26. M.K.Naik, 'A History of Indian English Literature', New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 236.

mother tries to clip her wings. This cannot be justified. S. Krishna Sarma has also criticised this double standard of the family which can be described as moving away from its roots:

Mira.... is brought up in a Westernized household where they have two dining halls and two sets of cooks, one Western and the other Indian, whose members went to European clubs and danced and played, where women folk spoke in English to English visitors, where even Dodamma the orthodox widow could understand English whether she could use it or not. It is a household which could quietly accept the unorthodox procedure of staying with them during her period of courtship; and yet , strangely, Mira's mother is not happy to see her thrown into Richard's company too often , and the relatives disapprove of her pertness and forwardness.<sup>27</sup>

The same is true with Kit. He also has double standards. Although outwardly he is westernised, he is

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27. S.Krishna Sarma, "Some Inner Fury : A Critical Perspective", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad. Vimal Prakashan, 1984 p.112.

a thorough Indian from inside. This is the reason why Premala could not get along with him. Her values were purely Indian. She modified them on account of Kit but was puzzled when Kit himself fell upon the same values which she had sacrificed for his sake. As Meena Shirwadkar notes, Kit expects his wife to be modern and westernized but he treats her as an Indian husband might.<sup>28</sup> He lacks the considerateness and understanding which is an essential part of Western education and which he, being so educated, is expected to show. Kit does not appreciate her efforts nor does he recognise her loving, benign heart or her requirements as a woman. She has been described by Iyengar as being symbolic "of the Mother - Mother India who is compassion and sufferance, who must indeed suffer all hurts and survive all disasters."<sup>29</sup> In fact all this is surprisingly better realised and appreciated by the 'Indophile,' Govind. Premala could not prolong the predicament and she, like Mirabai rebelled. Premala spent her pent up emotions in helping Hickey in his school work and Mirabai crossed the bounds of the superficial society to go on a premarital honeymoon with the man she loved whole heartedly.

However, contact with Western culture does not

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28. Meena Shirwadkar, Image of Women in Indo-Anglian Novel. New Delhi : Sterling Publishers 1979.p.56

have a uniform effect on the Indian mind. All Indians react to this contact differently. Harish Raizada has studied the novel critically and finally come out with three different kinds of reactions the Western culture can have upon the Eastern minds. He says :

India's contact with the Western culture and civilization led to the emergence of three distinct types among educated Indians. There were on one extreme fundamentalists who stuck blindly to the old Indian traditions and values and were sorely averse to the British ways of life and deeply hostile, to the British rule in India. They considered British rulers a scourge in India and did not hesitate to resort to violence and conspiracy to drive them out of the land . On the other extreme were those who had been completely swept off their feet by the English education and who found nothing valuable in their ancient culture and way of life. They were completely anglicised and looked down upon their countrymen for their backwardness. They occupied high positions in the British administration in India and were considered by the alien rulers as pillars of



strength for the continuence of their rule in India. Between these two extremes stood the middle group of highly judicious people, who had drawn inspiration from the liberal and democratic values of the British civilization and developed cosmopolitan and broader international outlook on life. They were rooted in their soil and were deeply concerned about the freedom of their country.<sup>30</sup>

Govind represents the first type. Kit is the Anglophile and Roshan represents the 'middle group of highly judicious people.' Roshan is at home in both the worlds:

Born in one world, educated in another, she entered both and moved in both with ease and nonchal~~a~~nce.<sup>31</sup>

She loves foreign clothes and scents as much as she loves India . "Though she has sympathy for the West and is on the intimate terms with individual Westerners,

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30. Harish Raizada, "East West Confrontation in the Novel of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.41.

31. Kamala Markandaya, Some Inner Fury, Bombay : Jaico Publishing House, 1957, p. 121.

she is truly Indian at heart and takes active part in the political struggle against Britain."<sup>32</sup> She is a lively woman who indulges heart and soul in whatever she puts her hand to. There is no half heartedness about anything she does. Her mind and heart are both crystal clear. Such people have no double standards and they can take the best of both the cultures.

But persons like Kit are neither of this world nor of the other. They create a reputation for themselves as Westernized people and then perforce have to live up to it. At times even if they want to go to their roots they are ashamed to admit such a thing. Although he enjoys the traditional eastern food he cannot admit doing so. Kit, as Meenakshi Mukherjee puts, is entirely a product of the west and emerges as a stereotyped "burra sahib"<sup>33</sup>. This Anglicized youngman is self-centred, self-indulgent and least concerned about the inconveniences or hurts he may be causing to another person. Harish Raizada describes him:

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32. Haish Raizada, "East West Confrontation in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya. Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 43.

33. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction, New Delhi: (2nd Ed.) Arnold-Heinemann, 1974, p. 83.

His westernized outlook makes him an alien in his own country. He is unable to understand and appreciate the aspirations not only of his countrymen but also of his own wife who has been bred on Oriental values of love and humanity.<sup>34</sup>

Such people spell doom for themselves as well as for all those who come in their contact. To highlight Kit's character, Kamala Markandaya has introduced Richard an English, who is an absolute contrast to Kit. Richard has no pretensions and is somewhat like Roshan. He also can imbibe the good of both the cultures. S. Krishna Sarma has elaborated on this point:

Almost throughout Richard and Kit are a study in contrast: the former willing to adapt himself to the alien environment without discarding his own rich sensibility, and the latter quick to be Anglicized and despising things Indian.<sup>35</sup>

Another extreme reaction is that of the 'Indophile', Govind. Unlike his foster brother, he blindly hates

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34. Harish Raizada, "East West Confrontation in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya, "Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya", edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 43.

35. S.Krishan Sarma, "Some Inner Fury: A Critical Perspective", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 110.

British and everything connected with them. Considering symbolically, he is always at loggerheads with Kit. He even dislikes the well meaning English missionary. Hickey, who works selflessly for the uplift of the Indian poor. Govind's method of rebellion is violence and he actively uses it in his political mission of driving away the British from India. Mrs. Joseph, explaining Govind's role in the novel, says that he "ties Mira's story in with Kit's. For Govind unwittingly brings about Premala's death-tragic in its irony, considering he loves her. Kit's murder results in a trial that separates Richard from Mira."<sup>36</sup>

All the characters of the novel are "lost in the political confusion of the independence struggle"<sup>37</sup> and for which Govind can be held to be the most responsible. Even Mira, who tried to keep herself away from all biases also gets fully embroiled in the conflict of interests of the East and West. She first supports Govind against Hickey and then leaves Richard for good as she gradually begins to realise that she could not keep herself isolated from the rising Indian

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36. Margaret P. Joseph, Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, p.25.

37. S.C.Harrex, "A Sense of Identity: The Novels of Kamala Markandaya", The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, I, June, 1971, p. 65.

nationalism for long. R.S.Singh has explained their relationship in the words:

... besides being lovers they were also representatives of two nations one ruler and the other ruled. Therefore they had to face inescapably that fateful moment when they had to choose between personal and national loyalties.<sup>38</sup>

The notion of 'your people' and 'my people' had been creating a rift between the two races for quite some time. Mira at first tried to maintain her equilibrium humanity in general being the criterion, but gradually she was also pulled into the general stream of nationalism. A.V.Krishna Rao says:

... quite naturally, helplessly and inescapably, she forsakes her love for the sake of a cause, even if it means being pitted against her own Richard.<sup>39</sup>

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38. R.S.Singh, Indian Novel in English, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, p. 138.

39. A.V.Krishna Rao, The Indo-Anglian Novel and the Changing Tradition, Mysore : Rao and Raghavan, 1972, p.58.

Besides this politico-cultural confrontation, there is also a socio-cultural one in the novel, Some Inner Fury. All marriages, or affairs between those who support the Western values and those who are the votaries of eastern values are seen to result in a flop. This is probably so because Markandaya feels that there could not be any marriage possible between two different and unequal cultures. There would always be disharmony in such relationships. Harish Raizada has attempted an explanation for this:

Kamala Markandaya's approach to the problem of mixed marriage is more realistic. Like E.M.Froster in A Passage of India (Sic) she thinks that lasting and intimate relation between Indians and the British were not possible as long as India was ruled by Britain and the two races remained locked in political conflict.... Both Kamala Markandaya and E.M.Froster thus emphasize that intimate relationships between Indians and the English could be possible only when India was free and both the races could meet together on an equal level.<sup>40</sup>

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40. Harish Raizada, "East West Confrontation in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, pp.45-46.

What to say of a relationship in case of marriage, there could not be a harmonious relationship possible even among brothers and sisters. Govind was a person firmly rooted in his culture as against others of the family in which he was adopted. Because of the hell of a difference between their views, Markandaya had to characterise Govind as a foster brother of Kit. By this method she symbolically conveys to her readers the vast difference between the two cultures or even between the notaries of the two cultures.

The story also has a message hidden in its folds. We see in the book that all who take impulsive decisions due to their extreme feelings for or against another culture often go wrong in their judgements and tend to overlook the exceptions present in the crowd. Kamala Markandaya indirectly, through the death of Hickey and Premala and the insult suffered by Richard, conveys the message that all actions done in haste or in a blind fit of fury are wrong. Markandaya makes us sympathise with Richard who is made to feel unwanted by those very people for whom he has done everything, and is in the end also left by those to whom he had given everything. To further propagate her message she makes us, see through the eyes of such people who are made to suffer at the hands of people like Govind. We

are made to feel angry towards them whose rash acts result in the death of the innocent Premala. According to Chandrasekharan, Richard, in fact, represents Kamala Markandaya's "warm appreciation of the Englishman as an individual."<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the novel Kamala Markandaya, we feel, is weighing the various possibilities of a rapport between the East and the West . The worst thing that can come between the two cultures is a rift brought about by any kind of misunderstanding . She accepts the fact that the two cultures are different at present but does not lose hope of a unision in tne near future- say in some "hundred years".

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41. K.R.Chandrasekharan, "East and West in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Critical Essays in Indian Writing in English (Ed. M.K.Naik et al.) Macmillan India, Silver Jubilee Student's Edition, 1977,p.339.



(c) A SILENCE OF DESIRE

In the novels of Kamala Markandaya the major theme which repeats itself outstandingly has been "the cultural clash of the two modes of life. The Western and the Oriental and the consequent actuation of the painful process of modernization."<sup>42</sup>

The process of modernization in India set in when the British came in contact with the Indians. Although modernization was welcomed and eagerly awaited, Indians could not cope up with it as beautifully as they would have done if they did not have their own traditional values to fight with. In A Silence of Desire Dandekar cannot make Sarojini see reason and relinquish the faith cure of the Swami. Leave alone Sarojini, he himself has to clear many traditional cobwebs that often blurred his vision of the new and changed order of things after Independence.

The theme of the novel is the 'clash between traditionalism and modernism, between faith and reason represented by Sarojini and Dandekar.'<sup>43</sup> Dandekar gets

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42. R.S.Singh, Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, p.136.

43. Madhusudan Prasad, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.V.

lost in the maze of traditionalism and modernism, and is able to get out of it only after a lot of tension and contemplation. Margaret P. Joseph says:

... the real achievement of the author lies in the projection of this theme through the awakening of a mind developing from thoughtless complacency to tremulous introspection.<sup>44</sup>

Dandekar had always taken his wife for granted as she had her set place in the family . According to C.D.Narasimhaiah, the novel is about a 'traditional Brahmin household with set roles for husband and wife.'<sup>45</sup> Although his wife , Sarojini, was a traditional woman having extreme faith in Indian religion, tradition and superstitions, Dandekar was not so, and neither did he care much for her faith until it assumed such proportions that it came in the way of his peaceful home life. His wife altogether rejected scientific methods and blindly followed the Swami expecting him to cure her growth in the womb by faith-healing. She did not even tell Dandekar for fear of his contempt. She tried hiding the healing process

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44. Margaret P. Joseph, Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, p.35.

45. M.K.Naik, Perspectives on Indian Fiction in English (ed.), New Delhi: Abhinav Publication, 1985, p.168.

from Dandekar for as long as she could. But when Dandekar had found out and insisted on a scientific, cure, she defended her 'faith' in words that pierced the white blank wall of 'reason':

Yes, you can call it healing by faith, or healing by the grace of God, if you understand what that means. But I do not expect you to understand - you with your Western notions, your superior talk of ignorance and superstition when all it means is that you don't know what lies beyond reason and you prefer not to find out.<sup>46</sup>

Dandekar gets disturbed as he realised that his wife was not going to listen to any reason. He panicks and goes to the Swami. But there he feels all his materialism vanishing, all his westernism slipping away, with only spiritual bliss present all around. He finally regains his consciousness, converses with the Swami, telling him the importance material wealth had for him, a common man, and is also able to get back whatever wealth that had been passed over to the

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46. Kamala Markandaya, A Silence of Desire, London: Four Square Edition Books 1966, p.63.

Swami. His wife also comes back to him. But after his successful fight he does not feel elated as in this win there was a strong smell of defeat . He had failed to shake the faith of his wife in the Swami. There was also a sense of guilt in Dandekar who is made to realise by the Dwarf that he has rendered the derelict of the area soccourless by driving away the Swami. Modernism could not gain an upper hand in reality although it seemed to have done so in the person of Dandekar and his colleagues.

There could never have been a clear cut conclusion of the novel as the protagonist himself is a confused personality. "He is caught between two worlds, one scientific ,not fully born, and the other traditional, not fully jettisoned.<sup>47</sup> He is traditional in his veiws about wives. He makes compromises with the traditional, superstitious values by believing that the 'tulasi' was not actually a God, like Sarojini believed it to be, but was a symbol of God. Edwin Thumbo interprets this explanation of Dandekar in a somewhat similar manner :

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47. Edwin Thumbo, "A Silence of Desire : A Closer View", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 138.

Distinctions between God and a symbol of God, a plant and the divine reality it represents, provide room for Dandekar to retain respect for the old ways of faith.<sup>48</sup>

His tradition overpowered him when despite himself he could not take a decision to sell the silver lampions as they belonged 'to tulasi, to God'. At the mere thought of selling the lampions he felt a "sudden fear that came from nowhere and drew his scalp tight."

When before the Swami, Dandekar confesses that his possessions did not matter a great deal:

When you were with the Swami, actually there, nothing material, or physical, mattered. You saw them for the worthless trumperies that they were, rose above your body, knew for a while the meaning of peace. Then you came away and the pains crept back, the worry, the misery, the lust for gold chains and silver cups.<sup>49</sup>

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48. Ibid., p. 125.

49. Kamala Markandaya, A Silence of Desire, London : Four Square Books, 1966, p. 112.

Likewise, he felt himself losing his 'citiness' while journeying with the dwarf to the Swami's village. Dandekar could feel his experience of life expanding and consequently "contributing to the breaking down of his narrow outlook."<sup>50</sup>

Such Westernized Indian's always seem to be caught in a predicament . They want their country "to be equal of any in the West."<sup>51</sup> But they themselves are not yet ready to cope up with this fast changing world. As Edwin Thumbo has explained:

Those very forces responsible for new attitudes- 'reason', scientism, that reliance on cause and effect - are themselves less confident than they appear because those who recently learnt to exercise them can not ignore the disturbing residues of tradition itself. Whatever its label, rationalism sits uneasily on new shoulders, remains in the grip of doubt, is never consistent or robust enough. A sense of permanent ambiguity haunts when the head and heart continue to reach after different

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50. Edwin Thumbo, "A Silence of Desire: A Closer view", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.135.
51. Kamala Markandaya, A Silence of Desire, London: Four Square Books, 1966, p. 148.

things.<sup>52</sup>

Dandekar's mind is typically presented by the novelist:

He could not make up his mind because heart spoke one way, head the other, and sometimes the two changed places.<sup>53</sup>

When compared to Sarojini, Dandekar seems to be a weak character. Sarojini has pure faith to lean upon in times of need. This imparts a confidence to her character. She is not torn between two worlds like Dandekar, or any other westernised person. But there is one major drawback with her personality. She totally rejects reason. This might have led to her doom if the growth in her womb were cancerous and if the Swami had not given her advice of going through the operation. But Markandaya preferred a better ending with a lesson also for such blind believers. A.V.Krishna Rao highlights the role of Sarojini:

But after all she accepts, like Rukmani in Nectar in a Sieve, the scientific spirit of the age which is not in conflict with the basic human values, as it merely attempts to make the

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52. Edwin Thumbo, "A Silence of Desire: A Closer View", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan 1984, p.122.

human beings more happy here and now. Sarojini's fundamental spiritual urgency and her moral scrupulosity need not be either sacrificed or subordinated; but only her attitude to the scientific civilisation needs reorientation.<sup>54</sup>

In the character of Sarojini Markandaya attempts to merge the two cultures successfully and elegantly.

Meanwhile, the Swami, says Edwin Thumbo, remains 'controversial within the ambit of the novel'<sup>55</sup>. Markandaya does not present him either as a charlatan or as a genuine Swami. His role, I think, is to act as the touch stone for all characters. All who come in contact with him act differently, while Ghosh, who "is well educated with a Cambridge degree squashed on top" outrightly rejects the Swami as a charlatan, Chari, simple, human and full of understanding, is perplexed after his enquiry. He finds that the villagers support the Swami while the sophisticated urbanites are irked by his presence and want him out of their way.

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54. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.7.
55. Edwin Thumbo, "A Silence of Desire: A Closer View", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan 1984, p.134.



Dandekar's part-Eastern, and part-Western mind is brought out before us. Sarojini is the only person who derives a positive gain in her contact with the Swami. She gets ready to brave the operation only after her Swamy permits her. She, unlike the other derelicts', gets stronger every day and does not grieve his departure. The importance of the Swami is made clear by R.S.Singh:

Here Markandaya establishes in unambiguous terms that the Swami may have been a menace to the educated few, but actually he was a solace to the anguished souls, and therefore unavoidably necessary for the spiritual health of the country.<sup>56</sup>

We can thus infer that Markandaya in this novel of hers has shown that if the East and the West are keen on a compromise then a solution can be evolved. The Eastern faith, if it is ready to listen to reason, can give way to Western pragmatism without having to admit any kind of defeat; and Western pragmatism, if it

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56. R.S. Singh, Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, p. 141.

is not bent upon acting stubbornly can also look beyond  
hard reason into the colourful world of natural beauty  
and mystic religion of the East.

(d) POSSESSION

Possession is basically a story of conflict between Western materialism and Eastern spiritualism. Both have been well represented by Caroline Bell and the Swamy respectively. Valmiki, a teenage Indian villager, is made the subject of controversy by both Caroline and the Swamy. Materialism lures him for a while but soon realisation dawns on him and he returns to the spiritual East to find his lost soul.

William Walsh has very concisely described the essence of the novel:

Possession (1963) moves from the West End of London to a South Indian village, and is centred on the conflict of Eastern spirituality with Western materialism.<sup>57</sup>

This is the first novel of hers which makes an excursion out of India to Europe and America. The Indian moves out of its surroundings and is dumped in

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57. William Walsh, Indian Literature in English, London & New York : Longman, 1990, p. 115.

an alien one. His reactions in the Western world are noted by Markandaya. At first he seems to have forgotten his rich traditions and is swept away by the sensual pleasures abundantly provided for by Caroline. He indulges whole heartedly in material pleasures. Caroline is able to have control over his mind, body and soul. She flaunts him before her society and takes pride in him as one takes pride in one's possessions. She boasts, "I discovered him in a cave. Oh yes, a real one. In India. Hediously bare and uncomfortable, except for those superb walls. And Val of course".<sup>58</sup>

In her contact Val seems to have lost all individuality. He lets himself to be possessed and over powered by the Western Caroline. He in turn, like her, also began the process of owning things and people. He loves Ellie first, then Annabel and thinks to have a right over them. He buys a monkey, called Minou and pampers it like Caroline does Val. She dresses Val up "in the habiliments of civilization, and has him in tow, even as Val himself buys the tiny monkey, puts a scarlet hip-jacket upon him, and leads him by a gilt leather collar."<sup>59</sup>

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58. Kamala Markandaya, Possession, Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1967, p.125.

59. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1987, p. 444.

Anasuya thinks that Val has fallen in Caroline's trap. But Val was not such a person who could easily forget his roots. At the cocktail party thrown by Caroline although he shows to have been completely overtaken by the Western culture, Anasuya realises that "he was not only ardent partaker but partly onlooker as well"<sup>60</sup>. Deep down in his heart he was still a thorough Indian. He did not leave himself at the mercy of the currents fully. "A cold watchful inner eye, as disdainful of others as of himself"<sup>61</sup>. kept reminding him of his honest identity. He could manage to hold back the essentials of Indianness which kept exerting itself from time to time. Val's work made an American critic says:

This young painter paints as if unknown to himself he had glimpsed, beyond the horizon, the transcendent powers of Universe, and the refracted light brings a hint of the power and the menace into his own painting.<sup>62</sup>

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60. Kamala Markandaya, Possession, Bombay : Jaico Publishing House, 1967, p. 110.

61. Ibid., p. 107.

62. Ibid., p. 164.

At times when Val is reminded of his land he loses his mood for painting. At such moments Caroline could provide no inspiration. Val needed the Swamy. In such difficult times Caroline had to bluff Val with counterfeit letters of the Swamy. This she did because for her Val's paintings were more important - no matter how they were produced. As India and its art were in fashion then in Europe and as Val's paintings were essentially Indian, with their help Caroline could make a plunge into the modern society of the time. Val's paintings were doing for her what her fading beauty could no longer achieve. So it was important for her that Val did not stop producing his paintings. She had turned Val's paintings into a commodity which she bartered for her popularity. Dieter Riemenschider has called her concept of Val's art as "essentially bourgeois"<sup>63</sup> Caroline, like a typical bourgeois, took full advantage of her connections with Val.

When Val came to know about the truth of Swami's letters, he lost all faith in Caroline and Westernism.

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63. Dieter Riemenschider, "British Characters in Indo-English Fiction", M.K.Naik, ed. Aspects of Indian Writing in English, Delhi: The Macmillan Company of India Ltd., 1979, p. 146.

In such a period of crisis he discovered that Lady Caroline considers him as only another possession of hers. He tells Anasuya:

She does not care for me. She cares only for what I can do, and if I do it well it is like one more diamond she can put on the necklace round her throat for her friends to admire; but when I do nothing I am nothing to her, no more than a small insect in a small crack in the ground.<sup>64</sup>

With this realisation, he began reviewing his own possessive acts. He felt repentant about Ellie's and her child's death. He accused and judged himself according to the Indian values and not according to the culture to which the wronged belonged and where he was staying at the moment. He mourned:

I let it happen. Annabel was right, I cared nothing for the sanctity of life - I, a Hindu, wearing the mantle of a Brahmin and it was a sham, a hypocritical mockery, otherwise would I

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64. Kamala Markandaya, Possession, Bombay : Jaico Publishing House, 1967, p. 55.

have let my child die slowly ? and for what?  
For what?<sup>65</sup>

He even realised his cruelty towards Minou, the monkey.  
He said to Anasuya :

Animals are created in their own right. ...I do not know when I stopped believing that, but I must have, mustn't I, to do what I did? Bought her in a shop, took possession like a god, for ends of my own.<sup>66</sup>

His disillusionment finally results in his return to India, Swamy and his cave. Here he seems to have been possessed by the God himself. Iyengar comments:

After the fever of his sensual escapade to Civilization, Val is now able to offer his all - make his 'atmasamarpan' - to the supreme.<sup>67</sup>

This has a very favourable effect upon his paintings.  
Even Anasuya notices it :

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65. Ibid., pp. 212-13.

66. Ibid., pp. 218-19.

67. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English  
New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1987, p. 444.



There was, too, a change in his work, so subtle it might easily have been a flight of fancy: but to me there seemed to be a moving, extraordinary yearning in the human countenance he had depicted, upturned, groping towards the light, a quality of compassion and profundity in his divine images, that had never been apparent before.<sup>68</sup>

So ultimately the Swamy and the ideals he stands for win as Val chooses finally not to deny his conscience and his self for long. He returns to his native land and family. When Caroline talks deprecatingly of his village he chooses to defend it by saying, "the wilderness is mine: it is no longer terrible as it used to be: it is nothing"<sup>69</sup> Delicate family ties, a feature of the East, is evident when Val's mother, who is on the verge of death, is seen thinking of providing her son with the ten gold sovereigns she had saved in spite of the poverty, she lived in. It is a direct contrast of the West which lives only for itself and is always in need of more and more money.

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68. Kamala Markandaya, Possession, Bombay, Jaico Publishing House, 1967, p. 231.

69. Ibid., p. 228.

The Swamy is seen to be victorious because, according to Meenakshi Mukerjee, "he does not try, because he has reached that state where pleasure or pain, victory or defeat makes no difference."<sup>70</sup> This ascetic detachment of his had to triumph over the obsessive craze of possession of Caroline. In the end she is reduced to a mere tragic figure as she has no spiritual strength in her culture to fall back upon. Shyam M. Asnani describes her tragic position:

As at the beginning, so at the end also, Caroline is on the same hills. She is still in search of her 'possession'. Implicit in her birth, breeding and demeanour is the fact that she cannot accept defeat gracefully and consequently, she appears at the end of the story as a lonely tragic figure, striking discordant notes on the solitary peaceful hills.<sup>71</sup>

Val is happy and satisfied in delivering himself to the hands of God. He is seen to be painting for nobody in particular and at a place where nobody can have easy

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70. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice-Born Fiction, New Delhi: Heinemann, 1971, p.110.

71. Shyam M. Asnani, "East and West in Kamala Markandaya's Fiction," Paper presented at the All India English Teachers Conference held at Madras, 1979.

access. Caroline thinks it to be a 'wilderness' and cannot understand the object of Val's paintings which had now no material aim in view. Only the Swamy, his mentor, understands Val and his paintings. Now the subject and the audience - both are the divine spirit. Val "works for that, and therein is the glory". It gives Val a rich satisfaction which he could not find in the West. Iyengar observes:

When the issue is joined, the sovereignty of the spirit must score over the ego's armoured regiments. All 'possession' is slavery, or a perilous precariousness. What we try to possess is taken away, sooner or later : Val loses Ellie, Annabel, and even Minou the monkey: and Caroline loses Val. It is giving , not taking, it is losing- not possessing - that paves the way to fulfilment.<sup>72</sup>

The novel also has an obvious allegorical significance. Lady Caroline has been interpreted as "England queening over her colonies, possessor of India, its benefactor and despoiler in one. Val is

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72. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1987, p. 443.

India, illiterate but spiritually whole, and gradually influenced adversely by Western society."<sup>73</sup> This novel is "one of the most forceful artistic explorations of the distortion of India's national character in the British embrace and of her consequent urge to be free."<sup>74</sup>

Caroline is emblematic of the old Empire:

She was supremely confident, born and brought up to be so, with as little thought of fallibility as a colonial in the first flush of empire, as a missionary in the full armour of his mission, dogged by none of the hesitancies that handicap lesser breeds.<sup>75</sup>

She "acquires" Val without even considering his willingness and virtually buys him from his parents forgetting him to be a "human being with human ties"<sup>76</sup>.

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73. Margaret P. Joseph, Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, p.50.

74. H.M.Williams, Indo-Anglian Literature 1800-1970-A Survey, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1976, p.87.

75. Kamala Markandaya, Possession, Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1967, p.15.

76. Ibid., p. 10.

H.M. Williams considers this novel to be "one of the most forceful artistic explorations of the distortions India's national character in the British embrace and her consequent urge to be free."

This 'urge' in Val is discerned only after his disillusionment. He discovers that he cannot find solace in the ostentatious and extravagant west so he tries to free himself from its clutches. As he sees that his battered soul could not be mended in "the affluent patronizing West" he moves to his "true home"<sup>77</sup>, the obscure village and the cave.

K.R. Chandrashekharan interprets Markandaya's message to be :

... that India should confidently pursue her own path holding fast to her traditional values and using methods appropriate to her culture.... In religion, she should be proud of her great legacy and her constant aim should be the attainment of the purity, equipoise and altruism represented by the Swamy of Possession or A Silence of Desire,<sup>78</sup>.

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77. S.C. Harrex, "A Sense of Identity", The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 6, No. 1, 1971, p. 238.

78. K.R. Chandrasekharan, "East and West in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English, Dharwar: Karnatak Univ. & Macmillan Co. of India, 1968, p. 328.

The final decision of Val signifies the path to be followed by India on its onward march towards progress. India can achieve freedom not by shaping "itself in the age of the materialistic West" but by seeking "its growth from the life giving springs of its own culture."<sup>79</sup>

So we see that this novel highlights the conflict between Indian spiritualism and Western materialism instead of the conflict between Indian spiritual faith and Western modernism represented in the preceeding novel, Silence of Desire.

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79. Harish Raizada, "East-West Confrontation in The novels of Kamala Markandaya," Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan 1984, p. 53.

(e) A HANDFUL OF RICE

A Handful of Rice can easily be read as a continuation of A Nectar in a Sieve in more than one way. Like Rukmini and Nathan who go out to the city in search of bread, Ravi also leaves his home in search of a job. Like them he also has to put up with a host of difficulties and is not as successful as he had imagined himself to be when he left his roots in the village. Margaret P. Joseph puts it :

In her first novel, Rukmini's son Murugan leaves the village hoping to make a better living in the town. He could well be Ravi, who does the same in A Handful of Rice. The idea merely mentioned in the first novel is enlarged and given full scale elaboration in the latter.<sup>80</sup>

The novel does not in particular tell a story of conflict between traditionalism and modernism or between the East and the West. The story moves on an allegorical plane. It is a tale of lacerating conflict going on in the mind of the protagonist himself. He is

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80. Margaret P. Joseph, Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, p.57.

torn between the old traditional morality which gives only a sense of struggle and fulfilment and the new, urban immorality which only aims for more and more money. These two opposite values might be taken as being emblematic of the two diverse cultures. The East is represented by the unchanging village and the simple, honest, although urban Appu, his joint family, his subservient and docile manners. The west can be said to be symptomised by the unfeeling urban society, the ostentatious and unsympathetic memsahibs, the immoral, though alluring, Damodar and his dirty ways of earning money and the disintegrating families. K. Venkata Reddy has noticed about the novel:

It reveals an Indian caught in the vortex of change, a change from the rural society deeply rooted in tradition to the machine based materialistic urban society.<sup>81</sup>

Ravi comes to the city full of hope for a better future but is instead confronted by insensitiveness, avarice, corruption and what not. He is exposed to, according to Iyengar:

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81. K.Venkata Reddy, Major Indian Novelists, New Delhi : Prestige Books, 1990, p.87.



... the insensitiveness of the affluent, their mania for conspicuous consumption, their hardness of heart; the exploitation of small fish by big, the worker by the capitalist, the Apus of the world by the Big shops in Mount Road; and the infernal success of the bootlegger, the black-marketeer, the drug pedlar at the cost of the poor, the down and out, the desperate.<sup>82</sup>

All that Ravi wanted in life is "the decency of a fair reward for his work."<sup>83</sup> But even that is difficult to achieve. He puts his heart and soul in his work but the memsahibs are never satisfied. Once when he was late in delivering the clothes of a memsahib due to the passing away of Appu, she collously refused to listen to any such excuse and behaved roughly with Ravi. He was hurt and felt convinced that "nothing lays down they should always have the best and trample over us and do us down and we should always come off worst."

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82. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Pubilshers, 1987, pp. 445-46.

83. Kamala Markandaya , A Handful of Rice , Delhi : Orient Paperbacks, 1966, p. 207.

According to Nalini, his visits to such palacial houses had corrupted him and he had begun thinking on a different plane from that of poor Appu and the honest Nalini. Appu had never complained even if he was insulted by the memsahibs or made to use the backstairs, like the sweepers. But Ravi felt insulted and rebelled against this practice of showing economic disparity. He had begun having dreams of becoming as rich as "them" and gradually his wants began to increase. The worm had begun eating his traditional morality. His mind became a war house to which Damodar was given a free entry. He began coming and going at his will. Ravi became a representative of the generation of "angry young men" rebelling against the "fatalistic attitude of subservience" and "fighting for a proper place in society."<sup>84</sup> He realised that in the "lawless" and the "dark" "man-made jungle" which is "full of snares and traps and unkept promises"<sup>85</sup> "one had to fight fiercely with whatever weapons one had. Or go under."<sup>86</sup> He wanted to fight the forces that grudged him a living.<sup>87</sup> The tragedy is that in spite of this

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84. K.Venkata Reddy, Major Indian Novelists, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1990, p.88.

85. Kamala Markandaya, A Handful of Rice, Delhi : Orient Paperbacks, 1966, p. 209.

86. Ibid, p. 198.

87. Ibid., p. 202.

knowledge and conviction, Ravi is unable to arm himself adequately against the dirty system and gradually succumbs<sup>r</sup> to it. After Appu's death he is weighed down by debts, beats Nalini, shows his parasite relatives the door, has incestuous relationship with his mother-in-law and like a weakling later repents each of his acts. He observes himself gradually advancing towards the throng inhabiting the jungle. Ravi has an instinctive "terror" of losing his identity "in an indifferent city" which he considers to be "akin to death."<sup>88</sup> But his old traditional values, which had been upheld by people like his father and Appu, keep pulling him back and helping him preserve his integrity to some extent. Iyengar has observed this tug-o-war going on in the mind of Ravi:

Caught between the pull of the old tradition that all but strangles him and the pull of the new immorality that attracts as well as frightens him, Ravi lurches now this side now the other side, and has the worst of both<sup>89</sup>

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88. Ibid., p. 23.

89. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1987, p. 446.

We find this struggle going on till the end of the novel. It had made Ravi very weak physically as well as mentally. The death of his son ultimately drove Ravi to Damodar, but this time he was rebuffed as he lacked courage enough to work for Damodar. At the moment Ravi desperately wanted a handful of Rice for the day. He is tempted to join the mob plundering the rice godown but fails to get any rice. Then he again joins the regrouped mob indulging in looting and destroying. When his turn comes, he takes a brick to hurl at the Nabobs' Row "but suddenly he would not. The strength of a suppressed laminated anger, ebbed as quickly as it had risen. His hand dropped"<sup>90</sup>. In keeping with his traditionalism he could not bring himself to "committing such a patently immoral act."<sup>91</sup> In his state of weariness he has no strength to make a decision and solve the conflict in his mind. Instead, he simply postpones the work of clearing out the web which is denoted by his words: "But tomorrow yes tomorrow..."<sup>92</sup>

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90. Kamala Markandaya, A Handful of Rice, Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1966, p.237.

91. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novel of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan , 1984, p.15.

92. Kamala Markandaya, A Handful of Rice, Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1966, p. 237.

Thus the novel ends without a solution. Ravi, like a new tragic hero, is seen fighting the "immoral society and its false values"<sup>93</sup> which in a way also represent the result of the impact of the West over the Indian society. Ravi, representing the simple, middle class Indian, is buffeted by all kinds of winds in the city. He desperately needs an anchor but in spite of all his efforts he is unable to get hooked to any such thing, i.e. till the end he is still searching for an identity.

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93. K.Venkata Reddy, Major Indian Novelists, New Delhi : Prestige Books, 1990, p. 91.

(f) THE COFFER DAMS

The novel revives the theme of tradition versus modernity which had been dealt with in her very first novel, Nectar in a Sieve. Both show the result that approach of Western science has upon the simple natives. They are uprooted and destroyed. The only difference between the two novels is that in the latter Markandaya's style has become very sophisticated.

To lay the foundation of the East - West conflict, the most important thing she has done is to contrive such a setting where the confrontation is easily emphasised. She chose a lonely, backward village of India, precisely Malanad in Karnataka, which was inhabited by tribesmen who had never come into contact with civilization. They get a cultural shock when confronted with the Westerners. The same is true of the whites when they come face to face with the other extreme of their civilization. Even the wild nature is too much for them. They are afraid of its unpredictable moods and carnivorous animals. Their work to manage the wilds is made even more difficult as they think that they can control them without the necessity of understanding them. Menon and Rao corroborate:

Markandaya sets the story in a symbolic Indian setting in order to emphasise better the confrontation between the Eastern values and Western technology.... The environment is used to determine and complete the individuals who live in it. The Coffe Dams is, at one level, a story of how some of the post Colonial British Technocrats react to , and interact with a strange and vanishing ethnic group with its own exotic customs in the midst of a fast changing world. The social setting is purposely limited to the tribals, who, though bypassed by civilization until now, lead a contented life in the valley, their confrontation with the Englishmen and some typical facets of the life of the Englishmen themselves.<sup>94</sup>

The setting gives rise to one problem after another each one even more challenging for the whites, headed by Clinton, as well as for the tribesmen and Indians. Although the first challenge seems to have passed over peacefully as the tribals docilely leave

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94. Miss K. Madhvi Menon and A.V.Krishna Rao, "The Coffe Dams: A Critical Study", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan , 1984, p. 168.

their land to give way to the construction of the Dam and the English settlement on that land, the event has a lasting effect on the relationship in the novels and is responsible for their various contortions and combinations. The tribals move from the land "without protest. Just got up and walked away like animals."<sup>95</sup> This is unpalatable to one who understands the rights of man. Helen, Clinton's wife is enraged at the inhuman behaviour of the English. She instinctively understands the tribesmen, learns their language and does not want any harm to come to them. She identifies herself with what William Walsh calls, "the more inclusive, the more ancient and situational Indian sensibility."<sup>96</sup> Her humane behaviour is quite the opposite of Clinton's. This might be because she does not view them with preconceived prejudices. She approaches them with an open mind and heart. Helen even asks Clinton to be a little sympathetic towards them. She tells him how she gets along with them. "I just think of them as human beings, that's all" and further adds, "you've got to get beyond their skins, darling"<sup>97</sup>. Finding him still callous and inhuman she

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95. Kamala Markandaya, The Coffer Dams, Delhi : Hind Pocket Books, p. 48.
96. William Walsh, Commonwealth Literature, London: OUP, 1973, p.19.
97. Kamala Markandaya, The Coffer Dams, Delhi : Hind Pocket Books, p.12.



asks him in despair, "Can't you care? Don't human beings matter anything to you? Do they have to be a special kind of flesh before they do"<sup>98</sup>. But Clinton is not moved by any of her arguments. For him the tribals were "blank opacities of total incomprehension"<sup>99</sup>. He continues his work of despoiling the river the tribals worshipped without letting the emotions to play any part in his systematic game. For him "the completion of the dam according to the agreed schedule is the main thing. What the tribals think or feel is nothing to him. He is armed with blue-prints, time schedules and statistics."<sup>100</sup> In his preoccupation with his work, he tends to neglect Helen and she gradually moves further and further from him. She finally finds true fulfilment in Bashiam, the "detrribalised outsider"<sup>101</sup>. The freedom she experiences and her nearness to nature makes her feel the contrast between the bounties of the two cultures. She is full of hatred for the Western mind and culture and could not help making an indignant outburst before Bashiam:

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98. Ibid., p. 105.

99. Ibid., p. 35.

100. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1987, p. 448.

101. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya" Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan , 1984, p.17.

Our world. The one in which I live. Things are battened down in it. Under concrete and mortar, all sorts of things . The land. Our instincts. The people who work in our factories, they've forgotten what fresh air is like. Our animals - we could learn from them, but we're Christians you know, an arrogant people, so we deprive them of their rights. Deny them. Pretend they haven't got any. Then they don't know about sunshine, or rain either. Sometimes they can't move , poor thing . We don't allow them to , in case they yield us ounce less of their flesh. Where is our instinct of pity? Blunted. We've cut ourselves off from our heritage. We've forgotten what we knew. Where can we turn to , to learn ? A million years accumulating and we know no better than to kick it in the teeth.<sup>102</sup>

The crisis of the growing cleavage between husband and wife gets deeper when the second challenge comes up. Due to an accident, forty-two tribals are killed out of which two are caught in the river. They are jammed by boulders. Instead of removing them and

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102. Kamala Markandaya, The Coffer Dams, Delhi : Hind Pocket Books, p.138.

giving their bodies to the tribals for conducting a decent burial as had been done when earlier two christians had died , Clinton callously decides : "Rather than delay the work, the bodies could be incorporated into the structure". This enfuriates the tribal workers, other Indians and their supporters. Clinton is forced to yield and give place to a situation which poses itself as another challenge . This is the turning point in the story when true human values are discovered and realised. Clinton makes Bashiam operate a crane which he knew was defective. Erich Fromm says, "The most devastating alienation is in the individual's relation to his own self."<sup>103</sup> This is what happened with Clinton. For how long could he have denied the truth. This incident brought him face to face with his own real self. Menon and Rao say, "It is only when Clinton realises this alienation that he realises the value of Helen's sympathy for the tribals."<sup>104</sup> This realisation and acceptance of the truth leads gradually towards the final reconciliation of husband and wife.

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103. Erich Fromm, Fear of Freedom, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, p.103.

104. Miss K.Madhvi Menon and A.V.Krishna Rao, "The Coffer Dams : A Critical Study", Perspective on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.171.

The last crisis, which arrives with the monsoon, reveals that "though backward, tribesmen have the advantage of the close familiarity with the local surroundings."<sup>105</sup> They can gauge the varying moods of nature by mere smell of the soil. While the Englishman grew tense as the future of the dam was at stake and the rains showed no signs of abatement the dying headman assured Helen and Mackendrick that all danger would be over by the next morning and the ridges would 'rise clear'. The prediction was proved to be true. Where science failed natural instinct came to its rescue. The tribals have a natural insight into the various moods of nature. According to Menon and Rao.

... the anxiety, the tension and the agony experienced by the dam-builders expose the vulnerability of man's creation in the face of natural vagaries.<sup>106</sup>

The setting further helps the novelists in keeping the British 'builders' to themselves. "We like keeping ourselves to ourselves," said Jackson. They

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105. Harish Raizada, "East West Confrontation in the novels of Kamala Markandaya," Perspective on Kamala Markandaya edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 60.

106. Miss K. Madhvi Menon and A.V. Krishna Rao, "The Coffer Dams: A Critical study," Perspectives on

kept themselves fenced in securely, away from any contact with the "tiger country". Instead of facing hazards they found "it easier to retreat within the charmed circle"<sup>107</sup> Millie Rawlings hated the Indians and had the motto "never trust the blacks." This hatred shut all her doors of understanding India and therefore, was the most upset when she heard of the danger that the swelling river might cause. This made it clear that the remoter the person from the local surrounding and its people, the worse was the effect of India on his nerves. This was more so if the person suffered from a superiority complex of being better off than the Indians in technical know-how and economic solidity.

Like in the Nectar in a Seive, this novel also deals with the effects of technology on the backward areas of India. Here, the approach of industrialisation destroys the peace of the tribals and their culture. According to Chauhan the dam and the river assume a symbolic significance: "one world view against the other: the mechanical versus the

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107. Kamala Markandaya, The Coffer Dams, Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1969, p.37.

mystical."<sup>108</sup> For the tribals their river has a metaphysical character, but for the British it is nothing more than a physical feature to be studied and mastered. Approach of technology gives the tribals no benefits. They instead become the losers. Their river is defiled . They are made to shift their settlement to an inconvenient place. Money economy enters their lives. Now to earn their livelihood they have to work for the British, helping them desecrate their own land. The chief bemoans that his people "are becoming money-mad." This theme of the effect that the approach of industrialisation has on the self-sufficient peaceful tribals can be compared with the themes in the novels of Thomas Hardy. In the essay 'The Coffer Dams : A Critical Study,' it is observed :

It is the same human anxiety that Thomas Hardy expressed at the end of the 19th century following the large scale industrialization of the countryside and the misery of the defrauded individual. The loss of old values of continuity and harmony was too heavy a price to pay for industrial progress. The self sufficient farmers and villagers... are not only

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108. P.S.Chauhan, "Kamala Markandaya : Sense and Sensibility", Literary Criterion, 12, Nos. 2-3 (1976) pp. 134-37.

exploited by the higher classes but also compelled to accept a new set of commercial values as opposed to the spiritual significance of cultural stability and of human relationship.<sup>109</sup>

The death of the tribal chief signifies the final death of the old order, the primordial wisdom. It could not resist the brutal onslaughts of modernism.

As Kamala Markandaya is always in support of a harmony between the two cultures because she thinks them to be complementary and not contradictory, she is always on the look out for ways to bridge them . In this novel of hers she shows a way out of the East West conflict with the help of the relationship between Helen and Bashiam. Both symbolise the forces of moderation and humane attitudes. Both rise above their social bounds and meet at a higher level of consciousness. A V. Krishna Rao makes an attempt at describing their relationship:

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109. Miss K.Madhvi Menon and A V.Krishna Rao, "The Coffor Dams: A Critical Study," Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya edited by Madhusudan Prasad. Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan , 1984, p. 169.

The Helen-Bashiam relationship in the novel is, in particular, a symbolic consummation of kindered spirits. It is a union of minds rather than bodies, of cross-cultural human affinities rather than promiscuous sexuality. The psychological frigidity and aridity of Helen when Clinton makes love to her clearly contrasts with the mental peace and fulfilment she experiences in her union with Bashiam for the first time in her life, she feels a sense of belonging and develops a sense of universal inclusiveness.<sup>110</sup>

Markandaya wants to drive home the fact that materialistic and scientific Clinton could have achieved nothing without the help of the humanistic Mackendric, Helen, Bashiam and the tribal chief. Technology alone would have remained barren and dry without the touch of humanism. Bashiam is a good example of this mixture. He has the same end in view as that of Clinton. But his method to achieve it was better. He "represents a blend of cultures, and becomes

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110. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 16.



the indispensable human link in the novel at the most critical phase in the construction of the Dam. He risks his life in building bridges of understanding..." between various races and cultures so that the work of construction is not stopped at any cost.

This attitude of Bashiam as presented by Markandaya leads us to "the poetic truth"<sup>111</sup> that although "industrial and technological progress are beneficial and so, even essential to a nation's progress, we get nowhere when we defy and deny the existence and sustenance of human value and sensibilities that constitute the soul of material progress."<sup>112</sup>

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111. Elizabeth Bowen, "Notes on Writing a Novel," Writers on Writing, ed. Walter Allen, London : Phoenix House, 1965, p. 178.
112. Miss K. Madhvi Menon and A.V. Krishna Rao, "The Coffer Dams : A Critical Study", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan , 1984, p. 169.

(g) THE NOWHERE MAN

This novel is marked by a remarkable reversal of the situation as presented in the preceding novel, The Coffer Dam. The Nowhere Man depicts Indians who have gone to England as trying to adjust themselves to the Western culture . But instead of appreciating their adaptability the West disowns and hates them. Having already left their own country, and adopted the western country as their own, this step-motherly attitude of that country makes them feel that they belong nowhere and thus have no identity of their own. In the novel, Erehwon, Samuel Butler has described this pathetic condition through the feelings expressed by the character Higgs who has been lost in the south Islands. He feels "dreadful" "being cut off from all one's kind" and even begins doubting his own identity. In the same manner, the seventy year old Srinivas of The Nowhere Man feels himself to be an outcaste after he has lived in England for full thirty years.

R.S.Pathak thinks that a general trend of the Indo-English novelists towards depicting such situations where the protagonist feels rootless can be attributed to their own uprootedness as most of the writers, he thinks, go through the process of

alienation. He observes :

The Indo-English novelist's reiterative treatment of alienation, his persistent delineation of rootless characters and an awareness of his predicament seem to be symptomatic of his own uprootedness.<sup>113</sup>

A few other writers are also of this view. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has rightly called an Indo-Anglian writer "a confused wonderer between the two worlds,"<sup>114</sup> Indian and European. Edward Shil also thinks that the Indo-English writer generally falls between two stools. He is "neurotic, schizophrenic, ambivalent, suspended between two worlds and rooted in neither."<sup>115</sup>

Kamala Markandaya is no exception. Being an expatriate she also must have felt the racial hatred rising in her 'adopted' country. "Oriental in cultural heritage and Occidental by habitation, " Kamala Markandaya seems to be familiar with the interaction of the two cultures and the resultant identity crisis.

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113. R.S.Pathak, "The Indo-English Novelists Quest for Identity", Explorations in Modern Indo-English Fiction, edited by R.K.Dhawan, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt.Ltd., 1982, p.1.

114. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indo-Anglian Literature, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1943,p.27.

115. Edward Shil, The Intellectual Between Tradition

The alienation and rootlessness thereby rising is portrayed by her very graphically through the person of Srinivasa in this novel, The Nowhere Man. Regarding this point M. Prasad is of the view:

Highly adept in seizing an opportunity to shape a current situation in the fictional form, Markandaya meticulously explores in the Nowhere Man the recently developed racial prejudice in England that she might have witnessed herself living there as an expatriate. The ambivalent relationship between India and England is realistically depicted in the novel through the experiences of individuals.<sup>116</sup>

Srinivasa and his family are transplanted to England where they face an absolutely different kind of culture. While Srinivasa tries to adopt the good facets of Western culture, his wife sticks to her Indian ways. "With typical Indian habits, temperament, dress and opinion, they form a micro India around themselves in an alien country."<sup>117</sup>

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116. Madhusudan Prasad, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. x.

117. Shyam M. Asnani, "East and West Encounter in Kamala Markandaya's Later Novels," Triveni, 48, no.4, (January-March 1980) p.25.

She continues wearing her Indian dresses, and use Indian cosmetics and eat Indian food. According to Thakur Guruprasad:

She never compromised her orthodox Indian ways, living on the British soil: wore saris and cardigans all her life in the damp climate of London and flaunted wooden sandals on London roads, imported Indian perfumes, pickles, Chutneys, Gangajal and even Indian earth..., and dying every inch an Indian wife, makes her husband look ridiculous by commanding him and making him immerse her ashes in the Thames!"<sup>118</sup>

Vasanthas sticks to her culture as she confidently believes it to be a better one. She thinks her religion to be superior to that of the West which she considers to be "excellent for ten year-olds" only. She left her country behind only to conform to the traditional Hindu wife whose duty lay in living with and supporting her husband. Like a traditional Hindu mother she wants to think of and plan for the future of

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118. Thakur Guruprasad, "And Never The Twain Shall Meet: Kamala Markandaya's The Nowhere Man," Exploration in Modern India-English Fiction, edited by R.K.Dhawan, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt.Ltd. 1982, pp. 202-203.

her children. That is why she persuades Srinivasa to buy a house. Vasantha does not forget her Indian hospitality. She has tea ready at all hours for all who visited her. Moreover, she could never take to the British ways of hiding emotions and love behind curtains and proper manners. Her expressions of strong emotions on the knowledge of her only son marrying an English makes her British neighbour comment:

The way these Indians went to pieces. Different from one's own kind, who would close the door and pull down the blind decently, not stand about letting the whole world see.<sup>119</sup>

She is looking forward for the joy of being called a grandmother but is shocked when her son dissuades her from coming to his home because there was no spare bedroom available . She feels she could not understand her Anglicised son:

Is a room essential ? I would have slept anywhere. In a corridor, or the kitchen. Just to see the baby.<sup>120</sup>

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119. Kamala Markandaya, The Nowhere Man, London: Allen Lane, 1973, p.32.

120 Ibid., p.36.

She had lived in a joint family in India and mistakingly thought that the emergency communal living during the war was a way of life for the English also. Srinivasa had to explain to her the ways of the English and tell her that they had to sleep together in one basement due to the extraordinary circumstances they were passing through at the time of the war, and the behaviour of their son was not unusual according to the culture of the country. This conversation brings out clearly the East-West cultural divide and also the fact that it needs a war to bring out the humane qualities of the English. Otherwise they are always coldly practical. Markandaya uses Mrs. Radcliffe as a contrast to Vasantha so as to highlight the difference in their mental framework. While Vasantha is compromising, adjusting and sacrificing having all the characteristics of a virtuous wife, Mrs. Radcliffe is unsympathetic and cantankerous towards her husband. She craves material comforts and uses her husband to attain a social status. Her husband has no other meaning for her.

Vasantha's second son, Seshu, also like his mother could not easily move away from his roots. This is the reason why they could not long bear the

transplantation of their lives to an alien soil.

Srinivasa, on the other hand, felt that if he had the essentials of goodness he could be easily accepted in any society as long as he is ready to adopt it. He acquires the British ways of clear thinking and "immaculate British manners"<sup>121</sup> as against Vasantha "who in her breath and bones had remained wholly Indian."<sup>122</sup> Before the war and during the war Srinivasa is made to feel that he has been accepted by the alien society. Although at first their house, 'Chandraprasad' is indifferently called as the 'No 5, Ashcroft Avenue, the war made their neighbours come close and recognise their essential good nature. The Srinivasas give shelter and food to those who came. They consoled and gave company to Mrs. Field on the death of her husband. All his goodness to others was recognised by his neighbours and they made him feel accepted and "a naturalised Briton" until the war ended and England was faced with a fierce economic crunch. It was literally a blow to him as he had by now begun feeling "at home in it. More so than I would in my

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121. Thakur Guruprasad, "And Never the Twain Shall Meet: Kamala Markandaya The Nowhere Man", Explorations in Modern Indo-English Fiction, edited by R.K.Dhawan, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1982, p.203.

122. Kamala Markandaya, The Nowhere Man, London:



own"<sup>123</sup>. He had made England his own country. "By adoption"<sup>124</sup>. After the war as unemployment grew the youth of England began holding the immigrants responsible for their desperate condition. They were made to believe, "the blacks were responsible. They came in hordes, occupied all the houses, filled up the hospital beds and their offspring took all the places in schools."<sup>125</sup> Fred once met Srinivasa and told him, "you got no right to be living in this country"<sup>126</sup>. He gave him all kinds of mental and physical torture till he was made to feel that he was an "unwanted man", an "intruder" Srinivas is seen musing over his situation as "An alien, whose manners, accents, voice, syntax, bones, build, way of life all of him - shrieked alien!"<sup>127</sup>. Disillusioned, he tells Mrs. Pickering:

The people will not allow it. It was my mistake to imagine. They will not, except physically, which is indisputable. I am to be driven outside, which is the way they want it. An outsider in England. In actual fact I am, of course, an Indian."<sup>128</sup>

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123. Ibid., p. 61.  
 124. Ibid., p. 172.  
 125. Ibid., p. 171.  
 126. Ibid., p. 172.  
 127. Ibid., p. 241.  
 128. Ibid., pp. 242-243.

Fred, like a Messiah, begins a fight against the immigrants. He assaults Srinivasa, puts excreta in his way and a dead rat at his door step. All this makes Srinivas feel himself to be "a nowhere man looking for a nowhere city"<sup>129</sup>. Racial tension keeps mounting up. In this connection Thakur Guruprasad observes:

... as the story enters the lean years of the nineteen fifties, he begins to learn the bitter way that he had neither been able to discard his Indian-ness completely, nor succeeded entirely in acquiring total English-ness, even though he had made England his own country "By adoption."<sup>130</sup>

Srinivas remains an Indian essentially in spite of his outward English manners and thinking. He is a thorough vegetarian and believes in Gandhian values. He could not relish a cake as it was made of 'half a dozen eggs, those embryonic chickens'. He sends Mrs. Pickering for

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129. Ibid., p. 174.

130. Thakur Guruprasad, "And Never the Twain Shall Meet : Kamala Markandaya's The Nowhere Man, Explorations in Modern Indo-English Fiction, edited by R.K.Dhawan, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt.Ltd., 1982, p.200.

Gulab jamuns in London market "to satisfy his nostalgic preferences'"<sup>131</sup> Believing in 'ahimsa' he forgives Fred for assaulting him and does not reveal his act before his mother. In personal cleanliness he goes to the extreme of discarding his shoes smeared with dog's muck and walking barefoot on the road on a November morning which results in his getting pneumonia and then leprosy. In utter disgust and in a reaction to the racial slogan of "Hang the blacks" once he takes a walk on the London street in dhoti and faced the consequences thereby. His Indian -ness had rebelled against racialism and years of suppression beneath the English facade. Thakur Guruprasad has explained such actions of Srinivas:

One can generalize about Srinivas by saying that while he has succeeded admirably in taking to cultural transplant at the rational level and in externals, he remains rooted to the native culture at trans-rational levels.<sup>132</sup>

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131. Ibid., p. 203.

132. Ibid., p. 204.

Abdul has been used as a foil to Srinivasa. He does not believe in Gandhian principles and, therefore, hates all British and cannot forgive them for making his country men their slaves for such a long period. Abdul grows rich and flaunts his fabulous wealth in the streets of London. On the other hand Srinivas has "a streak of the typical Indian contempt for materialism and sense of possession."<sup>133</sup>

Laxman, Srinivas' son is a different person altogether . He is not like his parents. He marries an Englishwoman, is ashamed of them and their culture, thinks his mother to be "sticking out like a sore thumb instead of decently integrating" with the western society. He deprives them of the joy of seeing their Grandson and rebuffs his father on his contracting a "medieval disease" "Lakshman is a hard headed realist and Indian sentiments are nonsense to him. He acquires the cold, common sense of the British with an eye on personal advantage and with a stubbornness that refuses to see the other's point of view"<sup>134</sup> . Himself being

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133. V.Rangan, "The Nowhere Man: A Critical Analysis", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 187.

134. Ibid., p. 188.

rootless, he breaks asunder from his parents without much show of remorse. He is a thorough materialist and therefore also suspects his father's relationship with Mrs. Pickering. But her essential goodness satisfies him. R.S.Singh observes about the novel:

Here the problem is, what happens to the progeny of the expatriates? This is a new dimension in her understanding of the problem of the twain coming together. "The Nowhere Man" is a rootless creature, a product of the meeting of the East and the West. But there is a hope of his survival seems to be the feeling of the novelist. Laxman, the British-born son of the Indian expatriates in England, wanted to belong "to the country in which he was born, lived and laboured, not in some reservation rustled up within it," Nostalgia could not do ; an existential encounter with reality alone will help the young man sort out his problems.<sup>135</sup>

Although Laxman seems to have broken all his ties with India, he also at his "trans-rational level" remains a

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135. R.S.Singh, Indian Novel in English, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1977, pp. 147-48.

thorough Indian. At the back of his mind he has the "Indian sense of inheritance" and is outraged when he feels his right to it being robbed away by Mrs. Pickering. Moreover, "for all his conscious contempt for his father, despicable in his eyes in every way, there is that compelling tie in the unconscious that makes him come to his father at every crisis and take his place, perforce affirming his solidarity with the decrepit symbol of the repudiated culture."<sup>136</sup> It is he in the last act who risks his life to save his father from the racial fire that was destroying the symbols of Indian culture - Mr. Srinivas and his house, 'Chandra Prasad'. Although the house is destroyed he is able to save his own father. That must have been a great satisfaction to him.

But why did Markandaya make Srinivas contract the 'medieval disease' 'leprosy'? Perhaps she wanted it to be emblematic of the ugly disease of racialism which cannot be afforded by countries in these modern times. Iyengar further thinks:

Perhaps Srinivas can be cured and certified as a

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136. Thakur Guruprasad, "And Never the Twain Shall Meet: Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man*", Exploration's in Modern Indo-English Fiction, edited by R.K.Dhawan, New Delhi : Bahri Publications Pvt. Ltd. 1982, p. 204.

burnt-out case by modern medicine. But that other leprosy, racial hate- who can guarantee a complete cure for it?<sup>137</sup>

The disease increases his loneliness. In this hour of need he luckily comes across Mrs. Pickering searching for company. They meet each other bereft of their physical mantle, i.e. at a spiritual level. She sympathises with Srinivas, nurses him and once even stops him from committing suicide. Thereby Srinivas sees the good and humane side of the British. "People like Dr. Radcliffe, Constable Kent, Mrs. Pickering and Mrs. Fletcher stand for the highest British tradition."<sup>138</sup> Talking of better people, A.V.Krishna Rao has to say about the novel:

The Nowhere Man is a fictional paradigm of the value of human commitments and connections. It underscores, in artistic terms, the need for racial integration, cross-cultural understanding and a cosmopolitan outlook in order that man

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137. K.R.Srinivas Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p. 741.

138. B.Krupakar, "Race Relations and The Nowhere Man, The Literary Endeavour, 2, Nos. 2 and 3, p.21.

survives as a human being in the contemporary existential chaos.<sup>139</sup>

The novelist emphasises the value of such virtues as stated by A.V.Krishna Rao by the denial of them in her novel and by putting before us the result its absence has on the people as such. Racialism is such a disease which cannot remain endemic for long. It immediately catches on and takes the form of an epidemic in no time. That is why Margaret P. Joseph has called the story to be a "true tragedy" and also a "literary tragedy" as it involves not only individuals but whole races. It has "sufficient magnitude" to be labelled as such. She says, "The incidents arouse not only our pity for the individuals involved, but our fear for the whole human race which permits stances that result in such catastrophes."<sup>140</sup>

While making arrangements to burn the house at No.5, Fred is hooked to the boiler by his own belt and is consequently burnt with the flames he himself has

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139. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.18.

140. Margaret P. Joseph, Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, pp. 77-78.



kindled. This incident is very significant as it contributes a lot in raising the novel to the level of a "true tragedy" The event signifies the destruction of both the races-that of the hater as well as the hated - in the fire kindled by racialism. Thakur Guruprasad observes:

The artist's imagination sees in the white man's hatred of the black the prophetic vision of self-destruction : an explosion in which the moribund white civilization would burn itself.<sup>141</sup>

Again S.M.Asnani reiterates the point that racial fanaticism is "devastating for both the innocent hated and the monstrous hater"<sup>142</sup> as conflict and violence spares none.

The Nowhere Man has often been compared with Anita Desai's Bye-Bye Blackbird (1971) which has the same theme except that the protagonist is not as old as

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141. Thakur Guruprasad, "And Never the Twain Shall Meet: Kamala Markandaya's The Nowhere Man", Exploration in Modern Indo-English Fiction edited by R.K.Dhawan, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt.Ltd.,1982,p.202.

142. Shyam M.Asnani, "Quest for Identity: Theme in the Three Commonwealth Novels, "Alien Voice", ed. Anadhesh K. Srivastava, Lucknow: Print House, 1981, p.136.

Srinivas and still has a choice to decide whether to stay in England or return to his homeland.

Living up to her reputation Kamala Markandaya uses even this novel for her purpose of propagation. Through it she makes a plea for racial integration, humanism etc. She wants the cultures of the East and the West to be complementary to each other. She does not expect them to meet or to unite, but just to nurture peace and harmony so that the two can walk hand in hand generating a healthy cosmic atmosphere. The import of The Nowhere Man is finely summed up in the book, Modern Indian Fiction:

Like E.M.Forster, Kamala Markandaya puts personal relationship above everything else and sees in such relationship the hope of a better future. In this complex novel she may well be saying that the 'nowhere man' is not really Srinivasa who is capable of both loving and engendering love. The 'nowhere man' is perhaps Laxman, who, as he rejects his father, is himself rejected by the land of his birth. The 'nowhere man' could also be Fred Fletcher in

whose life there is no room for love and understanding. It is they who are lost.<sup>143</sup>

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143. Saros Cowasjee and Vasant A. Shahane ed., Modern Indian Fiction', Ghaziabad : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1981, p. 105.

(h) TWO VIRGINS

This novel is said to be the worst written one by Kamala Markandaya. Neither does it have a well constructed plot nor does it have a central theme. It also does not portray the village life graphically and truly. The distance of Markandaya from the field of action of the novel is nowhere more evident. Even the name of the village is not referred to. The village is described vaguely as being situated south of the Ganga and north of the Cauvery. Margaret P. Joseph remarks about the novel :

There is little attempt at plot construction and the story is merely a tedious description of village life, with stereo-typed contrasts between pre and post independent India, village and city, traditional Eastern and modern Western ways, the whole amounting to nothing more than a documentary about rural living, such as the film director in the novel actually makes.<sup>144</sup>

Although the novel does not have a "well-defined

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144. Margaret P. Joseph, Kamala Markandaya, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1980, pp. 79-80.

theme,"<sup>145</sup> it has many vague themes that have been only partly unfolded before us. None of them have been pursued so as to give us a clear picture of what exactly the author is driving at. Several theories have been jumbled up in the novel - the theme of a conflict between Eastern and Western cultures the theme of dichotomy between tradition and modernity the theme of a search for identity and the theme of escape and initiation. But none of them could assume full stature in the novel. According to K.S. Ramamurti:

Unlike the other novels of the author, this novel is not built around any single motif such as the East-West encounter, the struggle for freedom, expatriation or search for identity, the conflict between tradition and modernity or again between spiritualism and materialism.... One could say that it is a novel on the conflict between the old and the new, the rural and the urban and so on but there is no consistent exploration nor a convincing fictionalization of any of these themes.<sup>146</sup>

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145. K.S. Ramamurti, "Two Virgins: A Problem Novel", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.198.

146. Ibid., p. 199.

The novel lays most of its emphasis on the influence that the West has on the East after independence. So many years of foreign rule had instilled a different kind of culture in the countrymen and the most affected were those living in the cities where the interaction of the Indians with the Westerners was the maximum. The Western culture having penetrated the cities began its onward march towards the villages. While analysing the novel G.P.Sharma thinks that the emphasis in it is "on the change in the rural life brought about by the modern money-based civilization in the country after independence. The changes are marked through the perceiving eyes of Saroja, the village girl, as she sees them in her village and of her sister, Lalitha of the city."<sup>147</sup> At the time the villages and also many city-dwellers were the embodiments of traditionalism. Like Amma and Alamelu they resisted all rationalism and materialism to enter their charmed environment. Even the modern Appa had to give in many times. He was once made to repent his action of desecrating the consecrated coconut. He had also to give in before the judgement of Amma and Alamelu regarding the abortion of Lalitha. Appa was a man of liberated thoughts. He was a follower of

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147. G.P.Sharma, Natiionalism in Indo-Anglian Fiction  
New Delhi : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1978,  
p.302.

Gandhiji and so did not believe in caste-system as all were the children of God. But Amma strongly believed in the fact that men were allotted their castes according to "their Karma their fate." Appa thought joint family to be an anachronism but Alamelu fought against this attitude and regarded it as a hint pointed towards her. So Appa had to drop the argument there and then. Appa regarded the "urbane intercourse between men and women as a mark of civilization" but once more he had to bow his will before the will of strong traditionalism. Alamelu did not approve of women "simpering with youngmen and flaunting themselves." She said, "There was no propriety in it and totally contrary to the code of our Hindu decorum which has safeguarded the virtues of our youth for a thousand years". She and Amma eyed Mrs. Mendoza, the christian, and Mr. Gupta with suspicion. They were considered to be pernicious Western influence in the village. Mrs. Mendoza's high-heeled shoes and Mr. Gupta's cream silk suits created much ruffle among the simple folks. The style of living, the religious practices and the habits of the christians were all viewed with contempt. Nothing of theirs was acceptable at the village level.

Moreover, the two, Mrs. Mendoza and Mr. Gupta, played the part of linking the modernized city and the

traditional village. Mrs. Mendoza introduced Mr. Gupta and both worked together at seducing the innocent Lalitha to their side. She was lured by material prospects of the film world. Although both Saroja and Lalitha came from the same background and were well rooted in their traditional culture, it is only Saroja who is able to stand the ground while Lalitha is swept off her feet completely. She gives in to her greed of amassing more and more money. This could have been possible only if the two sisters had different characters on whom the influence of their Amma and Aunt acted upon differently. Lalitha was more daring and less obedient and had a weakness for the show and glamour. She had no fear of the "corrupting influences" of the city, was talented and 'a natural harlot'<sup>149</sup>. On the other hand Saroja preferred a quiet and secure life under the protective wings of Aunt Alamelu and her old world values. To her city was a mad place where everyone felt himself to be like an "amoeba" - "one in a hundred, in a thousand you were no longer you"<sup>150</sup>. She felt that in a city one tends to forget one's identity as well, while the village offers one a sense of 'belongingness; a sense of security -

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148. Kamala Markandaya, Two Virgins, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977, p. 220.

149. Ibid., p. 243.



you always knew where you were, you knew who you were".<sup>151</sup> You would never be tossed about rudderless or anchorless, but instead identify yourself with the village, its "common beliefs" and "common traditions." You would never feel lonely as these beliefs and traditions would follow you all the time and at every place. But while Saroja felt comfortable in such a world, Lalitha was stifled. Although she had been already exploited and wrecked by the city, she prefers in the end to escape and lose herself in the crowd. She did so perhaps to run away from her real self. She had not the courage to face it like Saroja had. Uma Parameswaran comments:

The message in Two Virgins is the same as in Nectar in a Sieve, the sustaining power of the spirit of acceptance that is most evident in those who live in Nature... The storyline is a little too trite - a girl who trades away her soul, lured by city splendours and a girl who watches, learns her lesson and returns to the bosom of Mother Nature.<sup>151</sup>

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151. Uma Parameswaran, A Study of Representative Indo-English Novelists, New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House, 1976, pp. 120-121.

In keeping with the view of Parameswaran, M.K.Naik calls Saroja "a child of soil", 'a country miss' and Lalitha as "the child of grace" who yearns to become a "town miss"<sup>152</sup>. He also analyses that :

Perhaps in making Lalitha journey through her experience of the city trappings, and presenting Saroja by way of a contrast, Markandaya takes a categorical stand for the maintenance of village innocence.<sup>153</sup>

Escape and initiation according to Ramamurti, are the two themes that are comparatively well illustrated in the novel. He elaborates:

This is a work which could be discussed as a novel on the themes of escape and initiation. As a novel on the theme of escape it should make a very interesting study because it is a story which involves a series of escapades and escapes such as the adolescent seeking an escape from the world of strict adult control, the escape from the narrow world of home and village into a wider world full of lure and opportunities...

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152 M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature, Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, 1989, p.

man's tendency to escape from the consequences of his own acts symbolized in Gupta, timely escape from temptation and danger through a process of self-education exemplified in Saroja, the perpetual tendency of modern civilization to seek an escape from the world of those old time virtues and time - honoured traditions which are personified in Aunt Alamelu and so on.<sup>154</sup>

The theme of initiation is also interwoven in the novel. We see the traditional village being initiated into modernity, villagers into city-life and Western culture. We witness the initiation of adolescents into the mysteries and excitements of sex and of Lalitha's initiation into the glamorous world of art.

In her novel, Markandaya takes the help of symbols to convey her weighty meanings which also make the reading interesting in spite of the unsatisfactory construction of the novel. Lalitha's abortion symbolises a forced union of the East and the West which proves to be not only unfruitful but also causing

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154. K.S.Ramamurti, "Two Virgins : A Problem Novel," Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 203.

the loss of originality in Lalitha's character. On the contrary Saroja is a symbol of harmony and "of a healthy reconciliation of two different attitudes of life."<sup>155</sup> The "parents and aunt in varying degrees stand for the stability and continuity of the tradition of their village community while Mr. Gupta symbolises the fast-changing, superficial and immoral exploiting system of the city."<sup>156</sup> Lalitha is influenced by the modern Mrs. Mendoza and Mr. Gupta but Saroja keeps herself aware of the situation and acts with her eyes and ears open so as not to be befooled by any of the extremes.

I think Markandaya wanted Saroja also to symbolise the ideal Indian who takes the help of the west for her development but at the same time does not forget her own culture. Saroja stands for such a person who takes the good of both the culture and continues to move forward in a balanced manner.

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155. K.S.Ramamurti, "Two Virgins : A Problem Novel", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.206.
156. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya", Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad : Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p. 21.

(i) THE GOLDEN HONEY COMB

The Golden Honey comb is a new and near-perfect experiment of a historical novel by Kamala Markandaya. Iyengar has compared the novel with Malgonkar's Princes and Anand's Private Life of an Indian Prince but he says that her "canvas is larger"<sup>157</sup> She has built up her novel on many levels. The description, especially of the Delhi Durbar is elaborate. Then she also delves into the minds of her characters so as to give her novel a psychological colouring. Fantasy and authenticity have been beautifully interwoven. In short, she appears according to Naik, to be having "too many irons in the fictional fire here"<sup>158</sup> with the result that she has succeeded to build a "honeycomb from which the queen bee of a purposive centre is missing."<sup>159</sup>

The story is a "saga, told by a master story teller - a modern saga"<sup>160</sup> The lives and times of three generations of the princely family of Devapur covering the period from 1850 to Independence has been portrayed. In a way it can also be called a story of

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157. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 1987, p.742.

158. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p.238.

159. Ibid., p.239.

160. S.P.Appaswamy, "The Golden Honeycomb : A Saga of Princely Life in India by Kamala Markandaya,"

the struggle for independence of India with the Bawajiraj family as its pivot and focus of attention. The freedom struggle then going on in India has been intricately interwoven with the lives of the princely family, that is to say, the political events of the day shaped their lives to a large extent. As the Indian independence struggle in the novel embodies in itself the conflict between the East and the West it is necessary for me to illustrate the political scene of the time. Bawajiraj I was deposed and put into jail as he dared to defy the English. Then they appointed a puppet to the throne who would be thoroughly loyal to them. But his spirited queen, Manjula, had in her the seeds of rebellion . Although she was suppressed by the king the fire in her kept burning and was transmitted later on to her grandson, Rabindranath. Bawajiraj II died young and his son Bawajiraj III who had been brought up under English guidance, was made the king. He had been given English education and taught to be loyal to his masters. Bawajiraj III had been religiously kept aloof from his subjects and the real situation of his country. The plan of the English to keep him alienated from his countrymen was successfully executed and Bawajiraj III knew nothing about the problems of his subjects and also about their

exploitation by the English rulers. The English masters treated the Indians with contempt so as to maintain a distance between the rulers and the ruled. They "sincerely believed that India could do no better than submit to the British presence." Although there was no difference between the two as human beings and they could have worked better if they had co-ordinated their activities, yet the dominant subservient roles written into and essential for the survival of Empire ... preclude such meeting. They thought all Indians to be 'savages', Lady Capeland's grandmother had warned her against them, "Never trust one. Not one, even." India was for them "the trecherous Mata Hari". The British did not sympathise nor understand their poor subjects. They only exploited them without any show of compassion (of course, exceptions were there) and took its wealth to be used up by their own country men back home. First Manjula, then Mohini, and then Rabi and Usha witness all this with a heartfelt remorse and they join the fight against these 'feringhis'.

These characters reflect the remorse of the author himself. Markandaya developed a "tragic vision" on account of the realisation of the sorry state of affairs. Prasad has commented:

Markandaya's genuine concern for the miserable lot of the poverty-stricken masses and their ruthless exploitation in her motherland in sharp contrast with the glitter and gloss, affluence and creature comfort of the west has decidedly further deepened her tragic vision. Her concern for the have-nots has found expression in Nectar in a Sieve, A Handful of Rice, The Coffer Dams and even in The Golden Honeycomb.<sup>161</sup>

Illustrating her tragic vision Prasad further goes on to say:

Further, colonialism and the consequent exploitation of Indians and the throes of struggle for independence in India have also contributed considerably to her tragic vision. Markandaya has ably depicted in one form or another the exploitation of the poor Indians by the English people in Possession and The Coffer Dams (Valmiki is badly exploited by Caroline Bell for her selfish interest in Possession, and

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161. Madhusudan Prasad, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.xvi.



the tribals are exploited by the English people in The Coffer Dams) and the struggle for Indian Independence in Some Inner Fury and The Golden Honeycomb.<sup>162</sup>

Manjula, Mohni, Rabi, Usha, Pandit and Diwan all get influenced by the freedom movement then in rage and they in turn begin to show their rebellion in their own ways. Manjula imparts her liberal mind to Rabindranath whereas Mohini refuses to marry the king as she wants to be free to bring up her child according to her own desires. Both women fight against the then prevalent values and uphold the traditional ones. According to A.V.Krishna Rao :

Manjula and Mohini play pivotal roles in the affirmation of the continuity of the essential cultural values amid the myriad political changes in modern India. They represent the best of India's traditional womanhood in guiding and shaping the destiny of Bawaji Rao III and Rabindranath who, in their turn, provide peace and progress to the people of their state.<sup>163</sup>

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162. Ibid., p. xvi.

163. A.V.Krishna Rao, "Continuity and Change in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya," Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, edited by Madhusudan Prasad, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.23.

Usha is another symbol of independence who influences Rabi to a large extent. She stages a subversive play which is not appreciated by the king and the English but Rabi and the Diwan give her full support. Rabi is her great admirer and shares many similar views with her. Both sympathise with the masses and their rebellion against the foreign rule. A.V.Krishna Rao observes:

Usha (the Dewan's daughter) and Rabindranath, heir-apparent, make a perfectly compatible pair as comrades in their peaceful march towards the dawn of freedom. They not only symbolise the radical aspirations and idealism of an awakened people but also represent the royal commitment to the welfare of the people. They are at once the custodians of culture and makers of history in modern India, they are not only the heralds of changing tradition but also the agents of change itself.<sup>164</sup>

Rabi hated the way his father bowed to the viceroy 'like a lackey'. He lived with the common people and

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164. Ibid., p. 24.

understood that ruler can be successful only when he has been able to bridge the gap between the king and his subjects. He demonstrates this fact when he saves Bawajiraj III from the violent mob of striking workers by speaking "to them in their language , that's all". All the liberal-minded people try to instil this independence of thought and action in the king but to no avail. Although he wants good for his people he has not the courage to oppose the British. Rabi gradually becomes the leader of the revolting masses. "And the end? The wind of change is unmistakable, Britain's historic role must come to an end. Ring out the old, ring in the new: and end and a beginning : Britain's honourable withdrawal, and India's 'tryst with destiny!'"<sup>165</sup>

Apart from the political conflict there are cultural ones also. The two races abhor each other. The Indians consider the British as "mllechha", "unclean" and outcastes. The Brahmin Dewan felt himself contaminated after an audience with the "feringhis" as they were polluted because they "enjoyed the consumption of animal carcasses". In the same manner the British Agent did not like the Indians and

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165. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, Indian Writing in English New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1987, p.742.

had to smoke to rid his nostrils of the whiff of their curry. The Dewan's wife, Vatsala, had the silver goblet, from which the Resident had drunk, melted down to purify it. On the other hand, the Resident too had found the drink and the rose water sprinkled on him, "revolting". Hate, distrust and suspicion kept widening the gap between the two races and there was also no effort on the part of either to build a bridge because of the reigning political conditions.

The title of the novel also symbolises the conflict between the two races. The British try to build a golden cocoon in India from where they can rule the country without having to mix with its people. But this cocoon is broken in the end by the masses. Another symbol of the title can be that the golden honeycomb is India, the bees are its people whose honey is being stolen by the Britishers. This is further explained by Prasad :

...the symbolic connotation of the golden honeycomb is spelt out in the novel. The gold-like honey is enjoyed by the predator-Britishers but the bees (Indians) rise swarming in angry revolt, and the predators ultimately run away

leaving the honeycomb to the bees.<sup>166</sup>

As Markandaya cannot write a novel without a message for humanity, she has done so in this novel also. She has conveyed through this novel of hers that freedom is a universal basic right which nobody should try to take away. Humanity is all one and lack of love and understanding creates chasms and conflicts. Thus the novel can be said to have been "large in scope" as well as signalling "the impressive maturing of an authentic talent"<sup>167</sup> to create such a remarkable historical novel that provides, with other things, a wide platform for the enaction of the East-West Conflict.

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166. Madhusudan Prasad, Perspectives on Kamala Markandaya, Ghaziabad: Vimal Prakashan, 1984, p.xxviii.

167. William Walsh, Indian Literature in English, London & New York : Longman, 1990, pp.116-17.

(J) THE PLEASURE CITY

The novel is a story of a village being pierced in by modern civilization and gradually being invaded by science and technology thus destroying its peace. Although the novel again shows signs of artistic weakness in the construction of theme and plot, like it happened in Nectar in a Sieve and in Two Virgins, it superbly handles the problem of the East-West conflict.

The Pleasure City explores the problem of "how cultural barriers can be crossed"<sup>168</sup>. In fact it does probe into the crux of the problem by creating such a situation in which Rikki, an innocent village boy and Tully, a technical brain of the West, are thrown into the company of each other resulting in a friendship which gradually grows to such heights that the two become supplementary to each other. Tully is a thorough technocrat and Rikki, on the other hand, is an artist with perception of beauty and a thorough honest man whom materialism has not yet corrupted. Outwardly Tully is far different from Rikki but inwardly he also possesses an imagination which cannot be expressed or embodied, it is felt, without the help of Rikki. Rikki

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168. Madhavi Menon's review of this novel in The Journal of Indian Writing in English, 11 No.2 (July 1983), 58.

responds to this visionary in Tully and, therefore, acts as a complementary of his character. Also, Rikki's art could not have been able to flower without the help of Tully. He gives Rikki a free hand in beautifying the castle at Avelon.

Sometimes their relationship has been compared with that which existed between Helen and Bashiam in The Coffer Dams and between Mrs. Pickering and Srinivas in The Nowhere Man. As is the case with their relationship, which does not survive till the end and is broken in midway due to the cultural chasm lying in the way, so is the case in the relationship between Mr. Tully and Rikki. The difference in their social status creates not so much hinderance as is created by the cultural gap between them. The "ocean between" them finally rifts them apart.

The theme of the novel is similar to that of The Coffer Dams. Both deal with the approach of Western science and technology and its slow encroachment upon the quiet life of the village. Here the village is a fishing village in South India. AIDCORP, like the Company headed by Clinton and Mackendrick in The Coffer Dams, is also composed of foreigners as well as Indians. It goes and stays in the

remote village and tampers with its natural surroundings. In The Coffe Dams a river is diverted and tamed to flow into a concrete dam. The tribals of the village were uprooted from their land. Each one of them as well as the Western characters were affected by the construction of the Dam, the story revolved round it. Here also the AIDCORP builds a holiday - complex called 'Shalimar' in the village and suddenly the quiet, event-less village is transformed into a pleasure resort with bustling activity continuing throughout the day. The story also revolves round it. 'Shalimar' stands alone in the village as a representative of modernity, "progress" and "industrial and other development". It fights alone the "wretchedly unacceptable poverty and backwardness" of the village. The lives of the fishermen are affected. They come into contact with materialism and glamour of the city resulting in the shedding of pure innocence.

Even in these changed circumstances Rikki and Tully are able to maintain a friendship which is the message Markandaya wants to drive at. Although they could not maintain it till the end, at least they had tried to rise above all racial differences and other human frailties. This should be the end towards which



every human being should move. Only this attitude can overcome all the racial discord, all inter-national demarcations of language, colour, culture and society. Faith in humanity is the only thing that matters.

CHAPTER - IIICROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT IN THE NOVELS OFRUTH PRAYER JHABVALA

Ruth Prayer Jhabvala born of Polish parents in Germany, educated in England, married and stayed in India for about 24 years and now settled in America after her divorce has written a number of novels which mostly have Delhi as their locale. Her first eight novels are situated in various parts of Delhi, some inhabited by the upper class and the others populated by either degenerated upper class, middle class, lower middle class or upstart businessmen. Her stress is on society & not on character. She is essentially, as M.K.Naik puts, "a laureate of the parlour". M.K.Naik aptly observes:

The most distinctive feature of Jhabvala's novels is the subtlety and adroitness with which she unravels the gossamer thread of intricate human relationships - especially among the women of the Hindu joint family.<sup>1</sup>

This adeptness of hers can be explained by the fact that she stayed in India, in fact mixed and lived with the Indian society for more than twenty four years. When her western mind was fertilized by the eastern

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1. M.K.Naik, A History of Indian English Literature  
New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1982, p. 235.

culture, her unique novels were born, M.K.Naik beautifully corroborates the point:

... an important point of difference between Jhabvala and prominent Western writers such as Kipling and Forster is that she has lived in India much longer than they did and with far greater involvement, and more importantly, her marriage to an Indian gave her access to Indian Society on terms radically different from those in the case of these writers. Consequently, her best work reveals such inwardness in her picture of certain segments of Indian social life, that it is difficult not to consider her as an 'insider', who at the same time enjoys the privilege of being an 'outsider' in an obvious sense.<sup>2</sup>

But unfortunately this "outsider-ness" clings to her and sucks out the essential sense of affinity, which a writer ought to have, with his subject-matter. Throughout her novels she remains a spectator commenting on the ways of the Indians. At first her comments are mere observations of the society that seems to be very different from her's. These various observations then combine to create comedies. But later her comments which reach us through her western

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2. Ibid, pp. 233-34.

or west-bred characters tend to become ironical. Naik notices :

... that from the mid sixties onwards Jhabvala's irony has increasingly been turning sour, while her perceptions appear to be losing their fineness.<sup>3</sup>

This is so because, as she herself confesses, India "often proves too strong for European nerves". That is why gradually her "outsider-ness" began overpowering her, and she could finally escape from India only in her last two novels, i.e., In Search of Love and Beauty and Three Continents.

Naik has divided the first eight novels in two groups :

Jhabvala's eight novels fall into two distinct and evenly matched groups - viz., comedies of urban middle class Indian life, especially in undivided Hindu families and ironic studies of the East-West encounter. The first group comprises To Whom She Will (1955), The Nature of Passion (1956), The House-holder (1960), & Get Ready For Battle (1962); to the second belong Esmond in India (1958), A Backward Place (1965), A New Dominion (1973) and Heat and Dust (1973).

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3. Ibid, p. 235.

The two motifs are combined in the novels, always with the one subordinate to the other.<sup>4</sup>

In her last two novels, In Search of Love and Beauty (1983) and Three Continents (1987) the irony present in Naik's second group becomes even more concentrated and the cross-cultural conflict even more evident.

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4. Ibid, p. 234.

(a) To Whom She Will

This novel, like most of her other novels, is set in Delhi. There is no foreigner in it but all of the age, i.e., the immediate post-independence India, are in a state in which they cannot develop well-defined values of life. They often seem to be what they are not in reality. Working of the mind and the heart is discordant. They are living, as Ved Mehta puts, "with a permanent hangover" that lasted throughout the colonial rule of the British. He confesses :

... the setting of the British sun left... with an intellectual contempt for English values, but emotionally ... too far committed to withdraw... condemned to live with a permanent hangover.<sup>5</sup>

Amrita, the heroine of the novel, has typical Western breeding but she hates western culture. She chooses to fall in love with Hari Sahni who is through and through an Indian and an absolute opposite of what her family admires.

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5. Ved Mehta, Walking the Indian Streets, London: 1961, p.18.

... his unpunctuality was for her part of his charm. He was delightfully unpractical, so truly Indian, so unwordly, that he could not think of hard - set European things like time and clocks.<sup>6</sup>

She likes "his smooth oiled hair". In fact Amrita liked to categorise herself as a rebel against the colonial mannerisms. The novel seems to bear out the fact that such rebellions were in fashion among the youth of independent India moving in high society.

She now rather despised her family's sophisticated, highly westernized way of living and thought of it as being false and unreal and quite unsuitable.<sup>7</sup>

She was charmed by the awkward manner in which Hari handled his knife and fork. To her he "was simple and unspoilt, and his ways the traditional, truly Indian ways which had been lost in her family."<sup>8</sup>

Once, to show her indignation at the western manners of her family, she began eating with her hand; but gave it up when her mother and Krishna Sen Gupta,

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6. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, To Whom She Will, Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1985, p.21.

7. Ibid., p. 23.

who was their paying guest, were amused and made fun of her. This shows that "emotionally she had not yet been able to conquer the love for "Westernism" ingrained in her. When Krishna, a man of her own class, proposed to her, she readily forgot the feigned love she had been displaying to Hari:

Only sometimes she thought, 'poor Hari' and wondered how she would be able to tell him; but the thought did not disturb her nearly as much as she felt she ought to, and she soon glided away from it...<sup>9</sup>

Hari Sahni, on the other hand, thought himself to be going with the times in maintaining a love - relationship with a western - educated high - class woman. This background for love was responsible for making their thoughts and actions often very melodramatic and artificial. Anybody could guess that there wasn't any true love between them. Rekha Jha points out :

Amrita in her pseudo- Westernism runs after romance and the idea of love... Each loved the other or thought so, for such conflicting ways.

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9. Ibid., p. 236-37.



Hari Sahni aimed at cultivating Amrita's westernisms while she tried hard to give up her western ways and submit herself wholly to Hari Sahni in the traditional way.<sup>10</sup>

As Hari admired Amrita's western mannerisms, he tried to copy and learn them. This was why he felt very hurt when Amrita suggested that he should eat comfortably with his hands :

Hari had been shocked and rather hurt; to him it had seemed as if she were suggesting he did not know how a gentleman should behave.<sup>11</sup>

But he could not carry on the artificial love affair for long and consequently succumbed easily to the gentle pressures applied by his relatives on him to marry a homely girl of their own class and choice.

So we see that at first Jhabvala hopes and therefore strives to make a friendly compromise between the two cultures. But such hopes of hers are shattered

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10. Rekha Jha The Novels of Kamala Markanday and Ruth Jhabvala, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1990, p.108.

11. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, To Whom She Will. Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 23.

as she discovers that the two are poles apart and cannot on any account be brought together. The two friends drifted away from each other and had to settle "for marriage with partners from socially suitable backgrounds"<sup>12</sup>. The two had basic cultural differences. For one family was everything while the other had no sense of responsibility regarding the family. According to Shahane, the "atomization of the west has not yet affected the spirit of Indian society and the heart of the emotionally generous individual"<sup>13</sup>. For Amrita her lover was all in all :

But O Hari, even if your sister does not like me, if your whole family do not like me, what will it matter? They cannot come between us. They are no more important than my family.<sup>14</sup>

This individualistic attitude was lacking in Hari and Radha, Amrita's mother, was quick to exploit it. She tells Tarla, her sister :

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12. Yasmine Goonaratne, Silence, Exile and Cunning: The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Orient Longman, Revised ed. 1991, p.36.
13. Vasant A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p.18.
14. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, To Whom She Will, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1985, p. 24.

You know how it is among these people;  
 their family ties are very strong, stronger than  
 among us, the educated ...<sup>15</sup>

Tarla, who is also a member of the All India Advancement of Literacy for Married Women Committee considers such family ties as being responsible for the retrogression of society :

It is these family ties that we have principally to fight against. It is they who retard our progress.<sup>16</sup>

Radha also holds such views in her heart but as her own selfish ends are concerned she comfortably praises these family ties because of which her Amrita is being liberated from the clutches of Hari. In her heart of hearts neither does Tarla want Amrita to marry outside her class. There is one more reason for Radha to support arranged marriages. She in her times had rebelled like Amrita and married outside her class but was never happy as she missed the sophisticated society

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15. Ibid., p.160.

16. Ibid., p. 160.

and western mannerisms of her own community.

Radha and Tarla typically represent their class, in fact their age. Their minds are a jumble of ideas from which they keep pulling out the idea which suits the circumstances best and satisfies their need of the moment. The "hangover", to which Ved Mehta refers in his book , Walking the Indian Streets, and indiscision is present in all the characters of the novel.

Even Krishna Sen Gupta could not escape from this type of indeterminate thinking. Straight from England after his education , he was full of ideas, rebellion and ambition and a fierce determination to lead a different, a better life."<sup>17</sup>

He preached equality and communism. But by the end of the novel he seems to be worn out and ready to accept things as they are :

He remembered England now only as a brown place... The years he had spent there were as nothing and the ideas he had brought from there were forgotten. Forgotten, he told himself, because they do not belong here and they do not belong to me.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Ibid., p. 225.

18. Ibid., p. 225.

His idea of the woman was also changing. Earlier he had liked the "freer type of woman, more outspoken, more conscious of the effect of her sex and more deliberate in her use of them."<sup>19</sup> In contrast he considered Amrita, as well as other Indian girls as innocent and inexperienced. But gradually even this idea of his experienced a change. He realised that "like many other ideas and memories he had brought with him, she was an anomaly in these surroundings : certainly which he saw an Indian or Eurasian woman behaving with the freedom of a European one, he experienced a feeling of distaste"<sup>20</sup>.

In the end he was engulfed by the society which earlier he had been trying to reform.

Rai Bahadur Tara Chand is also an example of a person who falls between two stools. While dealing with Amrita he seems to restrict the choice of choosing a husband to her own class thus indirectly discouraging love marriage. On the other hand he shows himself to be very broad-minded giving full liberty to his

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19. Ibid., p. 109.

20. Ibid., p. 109.

daughters and grand daughter to choose their own mates. Tarla was like her father and therefore understood him well :

She knew very well how strongly her father disapproved of arranged marriages, for he still held on to the emancipation of women as a very new and therefore very high and rigid ideal.<sup>21</sup>

Although he tries to impress Amrita by his authoritarian manner, he fails in the end.

Thus we see that because of the infiltration of anglicism in the Indian society through the upper class the whole set up is in a boiling pot. Values have become tilted. Some think Indian values to be better while the others think highly of the English . The slavish mentality flourishes, and there is no genuineness to be found anywhere. About the cross-cultural conflict brought out in this novel, R.G. Agarwal says :

... Jhabvala points out in this, her first novel, how this impression is wrong and how beneath the facade of modernity, there is the

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21. Ibid., p. 178.

hard core of orthodoxy and tradition and how the uneasy blending of the East and the West has led to double standards, humbug and pretension.<sup>20</sup>

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22. R.G. Agarwal, Ruth Praver Thabvala: A Study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p. 15.

(b) The Nature of Passion

While To Whom She Will portrayed the sensibility of the "sterile aristocracy" of India, The Nature of Passion "depicts the unabashed, rising middle-class in post-independence India"<sup>23</sup>. Even this class, as we see, is suffering from the "hangover" of over two- hundred years of colonial rule. The characters of middle class are seen to be moving about aimlessly sometimes following the ideals of one culture and at other times of another.

Lala Narayan Das Verma, his daughter, Nimmi, and his sons Viddi and Chandra along with his wife are caught in the web of cross-cultural conflict. At times Lala Narayan Das is brimming full of modern, western views. He wants his daughter to be well educated, roam about in high society and speak English . He says nothing to her even when she cuts her hair which made her mother and aunt, who were determinedly old fashioned and orthodox, furious. The other side of his character is thoroughly Indian. Jhabvala has ironically connected the practice of bribery and love of money with the country, India. That is why she

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23. R.G.Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala: A study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p. 32.



makes Lala Narayan Das equate the negation of the above characteristics of India with influence of the West. R.G. Agarwal points out the character of the Lala which also explains his notions about East and West:

... he is against sending people to "foreign countries". He had sent his son Chandra Prakash to England and lost him because Chandra was against bribery and liked to be a government employee rather than a flourishing businessman.<sup>24</sup>

Even Viddi, when trying to show himself to be westernised is seen criticizing his father's love of money. He thinks that interest in art and culture only was "modern". But when he falls back on Indian ways he realises the importance of money. The same is true of Nimmi. She strays away from her class and society to mix with friends of the upper class who talk of Cambridge, wear decent clothes and have very good manners. "Nimmi, in a bid to be modern, goes to clubs and wears her hair short"<sup>25</sup>. She is even ashamed of her own family who are not well mannered and have no taste for clothes. She surveys them at leisure when

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24. Ibid., p.27.

25. Ibid., p. 30.

they are all crowding the hospital at the occasion of the birth of a baby:

And what bad manners they all have, she thought, looking at her female relations. One scratched under her armpit, another wiped the perspiration from her face with the end of her sari, another blew her nose between her fingers, and even Rani made a noise and opened her mouth too wide while chewing sweetmeats. Nimmi would always have perfect manners : She would always eat with knife and fork and never make a noise when she chewed; she would always have a dainty little silk handkerchief with her and turn away her face when she blew her nose; she would never scratch in public.<sup>26</sup>

Nimmi felt ashamed of her family. She did not like the way they gossiped and criticised the other women and even the way her own sisters dressed in "gandy sarees sparkling with sequins and little gold hoop earrings and even - oh horrible - diamonds at the side of their noses."<sup>27</sup> She does not like mixing with girls of her own community because "they spoke English badly".

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26. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Nature of Passion, Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1986, p. 27.

27. Ibid., p. 38.

Rajen and Indira, girls of the upper middle class, are her friends. She goes to clubs with them and flirts with men of higher classes. Viddi feels proud of his 'fashionable' sister when he sees her at night club with a Parsi boy. But like Viddi, Nimmi also returns to her own community and her family after making vain flights to distant lands of flourishing western culture. In this connection Shahane points out how well Jhabvala has understood social-India of the age:

The tensions in Indian societies today such as those between the young and the old, the upholders of orthodox tradition and the rebels against that tradition characterize the social world of Jhabvala's fiction.<sup>28</sup>

While explaining Nimmi's actions Yasmine Goonaratne has come up with another point of view. She thinks that Nimmi is a traditional at heart and all her 'modern' manners and tastes are only put on by her to show off herself as a rebel of the orthodox values of the society. This attitude she thinks, is necessary for her as all whom she idealises also act in this manner. Such 'superficialness' of Nimmi has been dealt with by Yasmine Goonaratne :

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28. Vasant A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p. 18.

Despite Nimmi's claim to superiority, her own standards are superficial : she plans merely to be more fashionable than her 'modern' sister-in-law Kanta,.... she wishes to be admired and envied, and picks Pheroze as a 'boy-friend'.... Nimmi... is easily consoled for Pheroze's eventual defection by the attentions of another young man whom she eventually marries.<sup>29</sup>

Likewise, Chandra and Kanta hold to their Westernism for quite some time. They give dinner parties in perfect English style. They believe that children should stay away from their parents in boarding houses and they themselves should get cut off from the Lala's family. For them isolation was modernity. One more reason for this isolation was that they did not want to be even remotely connected with Lala Narayan Das' family. They thought that government service had raised their position in society which would suffer a set back if they are seen to be mixing with the upstart businessman having earthy manners.

Jhabvala, once again, ironically makes Kanta link England with everything fashionable and modern.

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29. Yasmine Goonaratne, Silence, Exile and Cunning: The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi : Orient Longman, Revised ed. 1991, p.89.

Kanta is made to say:

... and Mrs. Ghosh, even though she has been to England, has no idea how to arrange a room in the more modern manner.<sup>30</sup>

But in the end both Chandra and Kanta are also swept away by the 'Indian' values and are overpowered by the Lala who truly represents such Indian-ness. Shahane explains :

The dislike of the commercial class is thus combined with a peculiar sense of dependence on that class and this is an instance of a perceptive awareness of the contradictions of the present day Indian society which is amply reflected in Jhabvala's fiction.<sup>31</sup>

Like in this novel, "the socio-cultural conflict is innate in all such Indians themselves and the economic conflict is often the deciding factor..."<sup>32</sup>. All the characters, excepting ones that do not rebel against the old traditional ways, are caught in the

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30. Ibid., p. 187.

31. Vasant A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, p.19.

32. Rekha Jha, The Novels of Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Jhabvala, New Delhi : Prestige Books, 1999, p. 100

conflict. They strive to remain on the surface for some time but are in the end engulfed by the inevitable. They feel satisfied with what they get because of their attitude "that it is so ordained and it has to be so."<sup>33</sup> With the acceptance of defeat by such characters all hopes of a compromise between the two cultures is lost and the cross-cultural conflict moves, as it is, to the next novel.

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33. R.G. Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala : A Study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p. 25.

(c) ESHOND IN INDIA

The two preceding novels are more or less representative of Jhabvala's mental state, who, while writing these novels was very observant and trying to settle down to the very spirit of Indian life. Meenakshi Mukherjee thinks that the writer reflects his attitude in his writings. Therefore, all the Indo-Anglian writers dealing with the theme of East-West encounter are themselves passing through the phase of a conflict between the two cultures and are trying their level- best to overcome it. She says:

... the Indo Anglian novelist more often than not is trying to reconcile within himself two conflicting systems of value.<sup>34</sup>

This is true of most of the Indo-Anglian writers, be it Mulk Raj Anand, B. Rajan, Santha Rama Rau or Raja Rao. They all reflect the conflict in their hearts and minds on the pages of their novels.

In her first two novels R.P.Jhabvala is seen to be open to influences of the Indian air. She observes the Indian way of living with a critical eye, but she is never very satirical. In the two novels she does

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34. Meenakshi Mukherjee, The Twice Born Fiction, N.Delhi: Heinemann, 1971, p.86.

not feel it necessary to insert a foreigner and portray his impressions about India and Indians. She is perfectly happy carving her small piece of ivory. But in her third novel an Englishman is seen to have been 'trapped' in the bog of a clinging, stifling Indian atmosphere. Probably, this is what she herself had started feeling about India. The more she lived in and knew about India, the more it grew in proportion and depth. The Indian climate, as Nirad Chowdhari also contends in The Continent of Circe to be true for all foreigner, began drawing her human spirit. This resulted in her work becoming more serious, satirical, intense, passionate and less tolerant. Disillusionment overshadowed all her previous tender feelings. This change in her novels is well understood by R.G. Agarwal:

Obviously, there is a shift in emphasis in Esmond in India Amrita's flirtation with Hari is an adolescent affair. Nimmi's affair with Phiroz is youthful folly, but Shakuntala's infatuation with Esmond, who is married to her cousin, is something that leaves a bad taste in the mouth. In To Whom She Will Nirad Chowdhari's disappointments are merely hinted at but Ramnath's disappointment is shown in greater detail. In Hari's acceptance of the parental authority there is a touch of regret. But



Gulab's acceptance of the role of a meek wife is shown without any redeeming qualities. Esmond, an Englishman, is a pathetic figure in Independent India. He earns his living by giving lectures on Indian culture which he hates. But he cannot show his hatred. He was attracted towards India the way he was attracted towards Gulab, but staying in India and with Gulab under the same roof soon makes him realise that underneath the beautiful facade there is something which causes real repulsion. As Gulab proves to be a slovenly woman, India the land of Taj Mahal, turns out to be a scene of unredeemed poverty.<sup>35</sup>

The position of Esmond in India is like that of a round peg in a square hole. In spite of his efforts, he cannot identify himself with India. His western habits and culture keep dominating him, his actions and his relationship with others. This is one reason why his marriage with Gulab results in an utter failure. It seems as though he had married Gulab just to impress the English and the American ladies whom he taught about Indian culture and history. His marriage with

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35. R.G. Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala : A Study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p. 35-36.

Gulab would prove his affinity with the Indian culture. He even tried to show off his 'Indian' wife in the European circle in India but he saw that Gulab felt very uncomfortable in their society . Even this he tried to turn to his own advantage. He began going out alone to the parties thus trying to impress the other facet of 'Indian culture' :

It gave him the opportunity of implying that real Indian ladies, from the best old Indian families, still stayed secluded at home; which thrilled his foreign friends by giving them a glimpse of the India they thought they had so far missed : the India of veiled women sitting together in marbled courtyards.... Esmond tended to foster the impression by giving evasive or distant replies when questioned about his wife; suggesting that the internal arrangements of his household were too private and oriental to be discussed.<sup>36</sup>

He was in the beginning as happy to get a dark son as he was to get a purely Indian beauty for his wife. But later he began to yearn for a fair son and an

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36. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Esmond in India, Great Britain: Penguin Books , 1980,p.34.

understanding English wife. He realised, but realised it too late, that there was a basic difference in English and Indian temperament which no learning or any amount of adaptation can ever bridge. He had many times tried to mould Gulab into an English housewife but had to give it all up in the end. His imposing of English ways of living and mannerisms on Gulab and her son, Ravi, gave rise to a lot of tension. It absolutely finished his home life. Gulab could not bring herself to leave her Indian ways which were ingrained in her from her childhood. Therefore she had to often resort to telling lies and doing things behind Esmond's back.

Esmond hated strong Indian scents and oily, hot, curried food. But Gulab loved them and could easily speak lies after lies for them. Esmond loved cleanliness but for Gulab it was not so important. She could do without bathing and her clothes were soiled and torn and lay all over her room. He often scolded her:

Smells like a bloody hen house. Though you, I suppose, would notice a little thing like that.<sup>37</sup>

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37. Ibid., p. 37.

He tried using the most sarcastic language he could manage, to convey the venom in his heart. Another such example of Esmond's speech for Gulab is:

You've got what I can only call a wonderful propensity to squalor. Tell me now, if pressed on the point, would you call yourself a slut?<sup>38</sup>

But there was the great communication gap between the two which rendered Esmond helpless and writhing with pain and pity for himself. Gulab could not even understand his tantrums, or she purposefully posed calmness at such times. May be it was both. Most of the time she really could not catch his abuses. She meekly said, 'yes', when he tried to rouse her anger by saying, "You'd be the original dumb blonde" or when he sarcastically asked her, "Tell me now, if pressed on the point, would you call yourself a slut?" But, she was not such an idiot that she could not guess even the tone of irritation in her husband's voice. Although she understood Esmond's anger she was too much of an Indian to oppose him or raise her voice before him. For her the husband was her God, her protector. No argument of any kind could shake her strong faith. Her stance is well described by Ram Nath, her uncle:

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So like animals, like cows... Beat them, starve them, maltreat them how you like, they will sit and look with animal eyes and never raise a hand to defend themselves, saying do with me what you will , you are my husband, my God, it is my duty to submit to my God.<sup>39</sup>

Gulab's faith could only be shaken after her servant attempted to rape her and her husband failed in his duty to protect her. After the attempt she immediately made up her mind to leave Esmond. Before that Uma had tried in every way to persuade Gulab to come back to her, to her home where she could be her natural self. But Gulab was too entrenched in the Indian tradition. She could suffer all kinds of torture and inconvenience but not leave her husband's house. Even for Uma, to take such a decision of persuading Gulab to leave her husband, was not easy. She spent many restless days and sleepless nights before arriving at the conclusion as "... the old traditions were in her, and often took her a long and hard time to overcome them."<sup>40</sup> All this was beyond Esmond's ken. He wanted a partner to share his thoughts and ideas with, like he did with Betty, and not a slave or a devotee who had no common ground to stand on with Esmond.

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39. Ibid., p. 78.

He thought of himself as trapped - trapped in her stupidity, in her dull, heavy, alien mind, which could understand nothing : not him, not his way of life nor his way of thought.<sup>41</sup>

Even Shakuntala's thought made him feel "cloyed and entangled". But with Betty he had a very good understanding. They teased and fought with each other and still got along well without the need of any spoken apology.

Jhabvala further differentiates the East from the West in her description of the characters. While Esmond and Betty are shown to be rational, Gulab, Shakuntala, Uma and other Indian characters are shown to be basically emotional. They put on a rational air only when they are shown to be copying the Western ways. When Jhabvala describes Gulab, whom she is practically using as an image of India, she uses such words as 'lazy', 'leisurely', 'languorously', 'placid' etc. But when she talks of Esmond who is representing English in India she uses 'smart' and 'quick' as adverbs to describe his actions.

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According to Shahane, the novel is about the "predicament of a European - its processes - in relation to the world that is India."<sup>42</sup>

Esmond like most Europeans maintained a distance with the Indians. He also had an air of superciliousness about him. This further complicated matters for him. Jhabvala had understood by now that "to live in India and be at peace one must to a very considered extent become Indian and adopt Indian attitudes, habits, beliefs, assume, if possible an Indian personality."<sup>43</sup>

But Esmond could not face the challenge. Indian sun which bore stoically over everything was becoming too much for him. His excursion to the Taj Mahal was the critical moment when he realised that he could no longer go on struggling against the tentacles of Indian culture that were fast closing in upon him. To him it seemed as though the weather, the climate, the poor inhabitants and even the dead were all joined against the foreigner and bent upon driving him away

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42. V.A.Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p.89.

43. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, 'Myself in India' in An Experience of India, p. 10.

from treading their homeland. His shoes were stolen and "Esmond, standing tall and slim and angry, looked very much alone.... he and the hot sun, and behind him, a fitting background to his monumental tragedy, the Taj Mahal."<sup>44</sup>

He could bear with India no longer. He played a half-hearted love-game with Shakuntala to spite as well as to attract Betty's attention, and then finally turned his back and scoot to England, thus extinguishing all hopes of even a concerted effort for reconciliation between the two diverse cultures.

Moreover, apart from seeking a resolution of the predicament of a European, Goonaratne feels that the novel has many characters that are also seeking an escape to freedom. Esmond wants to be liberated from Gulab and India, Shakuntala from conventions and traditions, Hardayal from sense of guilt of having taken advantage of free India for his own advancement and Lakshmi from her own poverty due to her husband's honesty. Goonaratne comments that :

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44. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Esmond in India, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1980, p. 137.



Ruth Jhabvala's third novel could well have been sub-titled 'The Nature of Freedom' for Shakuntala is in reality (like Esmond and many other characters in the novel) still in bondage although living in 'free India' ten years after Independence.... Shakuntala... and Hardyal... they are both invisibly bound by the silken strands of tanha, materialistic desire, which emanate from the discreet, yet powerful personality of Shakuntala's mother, Madhuri. Amrit and Indira... are bound, by their own conventionality and their limited aims in life.<sup>45</sup>

She goes on to say :

The single character in Esmond in India who appears to have found true 'freedom' of spirit is the absent Narayan, Ram Nath's brilliant young son, a physician who has given up wealth, comfort and the satisfaction of pleasing his querulous mother in order to work among the poor, Gandhian ideals of selfless service seem to live on in the austere simple way of life

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45. Yasmine Goonaratne, Silence, Exile and Cunning : The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi :

chosen by father and son.... Yet both Narayan and his father have had to sacrifice comfort and honour in order to remain free in spirit.<sup>46</sup>

But the wrong values have come to be so deeply ingrained in the lives of Indians that such pure virtue can hardly be appreciated by them. Such people who do not run after material comforts are not recognised by the society. It seems as though Indians have become enemies of their own culture and progress. This is what Jhabvala wants to show in her novels. She wants to point out to the Easterners that emulating the West will only give rise to confusion and conflict in their minds as well as in their society, and India can rise from enthraldom only when such free spirits like those of Narayan and Ramnath are given respect and a place in the society.

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46. Ibid., p. 110.

(d) THE HOUSEHOLDER

This novel is different from the other novels as it deals with problems of the lower-middle income group of people - how they squeeze out a living out of the small, fixed salary they draw. We get a glimpse of the difficulties they have to face in setting a comfortable household for their families the dreams they entertain and the diversions they enjoy. The area the story deals with is smaller than that of the other novels. The whole story revolves round Prem, his work, his family and his Indian and western friends.

The other difference is Bhavala's regular use of irony. The sarcastic tone of her previous novels gives way to ironic humour. Throughout the novel, Prem is off and on made the butt of laughter, but there is also a touch of pity for him. He wants a desperate rise in salary or a cut in the rent of the house but instead only manages to put himself up as a laughing stock. In the novel, while the Indians are seen to be busy setting their households being unable to think about anything beyond the 'grihastashrama', the materialistic Europeans, for a change, are involved knee deep in Indian philosophy and Yoga. All their thoughts and speech are concentrated on the spiritual aspect of

life, whereas, ironically, the Indians have no time to think of their own culture and spirituality. They are trapped in the bonds of materialism and are striving to make both ends meet. While the Indians are busy building up their family, the westerners like Hans, Kitty and their friends have left their families and their own country to come to India which they considered to be a land of wisdom. They also entertain a misconception that all Indians, as they are already living in India, are naturally spiritual. All actions of Prem and other Indians are, therefore, interpreted by them, according to their own line of thought. They cannot think of anything else but spirituality and search for truth. But their misconceptions about Indians is gradually removed. This disillusionment can in some ways be compared to the disillusionment that Esmond undergoes by the end of his stay in India:

... and her eyes - her beautiful deep sad eyes, which once he had thought full of all the wisdom and the sorrow of the East - remained what he had long since decided was a mere blank.<sup>47</sup>

Kitty, being older to Hans, had also started feeling

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47. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Esmond in India, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1980, p. 166.

this kind of disillusionment. She said that at first she had thought Mohammad Ali, her servant, to have been very spiritual because of the expression of profound melancholy he bore and in whose eyes she thought that 'all Eternity' could be seen like in a mirror. She said:

You see, once I thought he despised me because of his deep spiritual quality which I thought he had and I hadn't <sup>48</sup>.

But now she was 'not so sure about Mohammad Ali's spirituality as well as the spiritual involvement of the other Indians. Hans, being less experienced, still went after looks and thought the Indian stock to be of an elevated kind. He said to Prem:

But for you, an Indian how easy it is ! By nature you are unworldly . But my nature is so that I thrust outwards to adventure and action.... A Westerner's nature is so that he feels he must conquer the world. Can I change my nature so that I can conquer myself? <sup>49</sup>

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48. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, The Householder, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1980, p. 45.

49. Ibid., p. 89.

All the time Prem protested against the label which Hans had been pasting on his forehead. But Hans had no patience or any sympathy to hear the views and thoughts of Prem, the Indian. He was too busy rattling away.

We see a kind of communication gap between the Easterns and the Westerns in the novel. Although Hans and Prem are friends they can hardly communicate their feelings with each other except in their last meeting when Hans could get out of his shell of superficial spiritualism . At the time Prem was astonished to see tears in Hans' eyes. In Peggy's party Hans felt himself very out of place. Whenever he tried to make conversation it always resulted in a failure and he could never come up to the expectations of the Europeans present in the party. When a lady came forward and stated that in spite of her not being an Indian by birth she was Indian by 'conviction', Prem, trying to make conversation began harping on the word 'conviction' in a completely different context. He began talking politics but was rudely stopped. This conversation is a fine example of how people from different cultures and mental levels, who are satisfied to exist on the superficial levels and lack a firm base, cannot communicate with each other satisfactorily. This same communication gap is evident

when Prem and Raj meet Hans at the Coffee House. Raj cannot understand the joke of Hans about he being a 'cog in the vast machinery of the government.' But his seriousness can be excused if we consider his position and circumstances. For him his job could not be a subject of any kind of joke. It was his livelihood and therefore, very important. But for a person like Hans, who had no family to support and no worry about the next meal or the saving of every single pie for the future, how could he feel the importance of a 'job'. He could afford to waste his time thinking about spirituality and matters of the other world but not Raj or Prem. All through their meeting they continued to talk on different levels. Raj and Prem throughout talked of this world and were not anyhow misled by the interruptions of Hans who kept swooping away their thoughts from the mundane level to a higher, spiritual level in which he liked to always dwell. Shahane has attempted an explanation of the ironic mode used by Jhabvala in the novel as well as this communication gap. He says :

A significant aspect of Jhabvala's ironic mode is that, contrary to popular belief, the west is shown as seeking the spiritual value of life and the east is presented as deeply involved in

materialistic pursuits. There are, of course, inversions within this basic ironic inversion. There is also a Swami in The Householder who preaches Vedanta, the need to say 'Yea' to the call from within. Jhabvala's ironic thrust in other novels is directed not merely against fake Indian Swamis, but also at the European seekers of the spirit. Hans and Kitty too are satirized effectively to expose their superficial enthusiasm for eastern philosophy and their high-sounding wordiness. One of the reasons why Prem and Hans cannot really communicate is that they are carried away by words, words, words. Whereas Hans indulges in philosophical, high-sounding terms, Prem follows suit in using economic or political jargon. And since the two streams of jargon do not converge at any single point, they cannot establish any link of genuine communication.<sup>50</sup>

Jhabvala has observed very minutely while describing the contrast in the cultural atmosphere of the parties - one thrown by Foggy and the other by

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50. V.A. Shahane, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, New Delhi : Arnold - Heinemann, 1976, p.68-69.



Mr. Khanna. The first one was informal. Women wore floral frocks, took active part in the arguments and conversed freely. In contrast, the tea at Mr. Khanna's school, of which Jhabvala has given a graphic description, was very formal:

The ladies remained unmoved. They were all seated together in one half of the circle of chairs, while their husbands were segregated in the other half. They themselves stiff and looked very much aware both of the clothes they were wearing, which were all shining and new and of the opulent surroundings in which they found themselves.<sup>51</sup>

Conversation was not easy and it was only Mr. Chaddha who was doing most of the talking.

To round it all up, I must say, that 'The Householder' is a different kind of novel, whose basic theme is not to attain any kind of a reconciliation of the East and the West, but just to make a statement of facts and to put forward the observation that the two are poles apart. The serious 'eastern householder' and the frivolous 'western tourist-cum-spiritual-seeker'<sup>52</sup> have no common base to stand upon.

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51. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, The Householder, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1980, p.72.

(e) GET READY FOR BATTLE

Coming after the simple, straightforward 'The Householder' Get Ready for Battle seems to be a very complex novel. It is full of characters - all having a definite role to perform in the shaping of the story. Moreover, most of them are connected with each other having a love-hate relationship between them. The novel deals with either a clash of idealistic characters with mammon worshippers or of modernity with orthodoxy.

The novel is full of irony and satire. Irony is present when people talk about being modern and open-minded but act, in an unconscious way, in the most orthodox manner. Satire comes in when hypocrites of the society are being described .

The novel opens on a satirical note. Gulzarilal has a party going on at his residence and his guests are busy with each other - flattering their superiors or getting flattered by their juniors. Jhabvala, while describing the party, satirizes, the effect 'modern times' was bringing upon the women - folk :

These being modern times, many people had brought their wives who sat in a semicircle at one end of the room and sipped pineapple juice. Most of them were strangers to one another, but even those who had met before did not feel easy enough, in these overwhelmingly social circumstances, to make any kind of conversation. So they only sat, stiff in their best saris and jewellery, and patiently waited for their husbands to say it was time to go home. They accepted their boredom without resentment, for they understood it comprised the social life which, as modern women, it was their duty to take part in.<sup>53</sup>

This, in part, reminds us of the formal tea-party of Mr. Khanna in The Householder and confirms our belief that Jhabvala is obsessed with the difference in the social setting of the two cultures. In direct contrast is the informal party thrown by the modern Saxenas:

And there they all were - Toto Saxena and his wife Ushi, Iqqi Singh and Premola, Pitu and Shila, Chuchu Bhatt and Lindi, Ballu and Bibi -

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53. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Get Ready for Battle, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1981, pp.7-8.

all the up and coming young men and their modern wives. It was a fashionable party, so men and women sat not apart as at Gulzari Lal's party but intermingled, some of them in casual attitudes on the floor, and there was drinking and smoking and even some harmless, sexless flirtation.<sup>54</sup>

The group at their house consists of all kinds of unorthodox, young men and women having modern thoughts about politics, society, etc. When illustrating to us the set up of the party, Jhabvala takes an opportunity of describing the changing ethos of post-Independence India when the younger generation could not adapt itself to the fast changing times. In such cases, original thought was often lacking and people found an easy way out in imitating the west blindly, though they could not even do that without any inhibitions. Although Gogo was fashionable and said to be very 'modern' she always maintained a distance with men and was worried about what her mother would think when she was late in reaching home after the party. The conflict in the mind of the younger generation has been well satirized by the words put in the mouth of Pitu that were in contrast with the circumstances he was in:

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54. Ibid., p. 59.

'Village fiddlesticks', said Pitu. 'That's all sentimental rubbish.' He made a sound of disgust, waved his hand in the air and stumbled over a hand-loom rug.... It's time we got rid of all that village hocuspocus, he snorted.<sup>55</sup>

Pitu was opposing Premola Singh's argument about concentrating more on cottage industries if India's position is to be improved. The irony of the situation is that although the modern society is opposing village uplift by encouraging village handicraft, people are using and buying all kinds of handloom products because it is the 'in thing' at the time, without giving it a second thought. People are just mad after fashion. Also such superficial, glib discussions were very common during the various social gatherings because, "it showed that they were not just flighty young socialites but, on the contrary, deeply concerned with questions of national importance."<sup>56</sup>

This was also true to Mrs. Bhatnagar's tea-parties and her various committee meetings to discuss their great

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55. Ibid., p. 62.

56. Ibid., p. 61.

community work programmes. All this is very well understood by Shahane. She recognises the satire indulged in by Jhabvala :

Vishnu, before his marriage, was a member of Toto's and Ushi's smart set in westernised, sophisticated, Bohemian New Delhi. They are in part flighty young so socialites and in part pretentiously intellectual 'hocus-pocus' . While Gogo dances with Chuchu, Pitu harangues on steel production, and rebuffs Premola Singh's notions of village handicraft and rural uplift. Jhabvala's satirical onslaught on Delhi's westernized high society is sharp and incisive and she demonstrates her great power as an artist in exposing the hollowness of this society.<sup>57</sup>

The cross-cultural conflict in the minds of the characters is well described in the novel. Although 'divorce' has been given a legal and a modern character with the help of the Hindu Code Bill and is often the topic of discussion among the modern people, it is not yet accepted in the Indian society. Gulzari Lal cannot

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57. V.A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold - Heinemann, 1976, pp. 108-9.

bring himself to introduce this 'still too new - fangled' idea, 'into a family such as his'. However, Kusum "had now become modern and decided that mistresses were no longer socially feasible and that remarried widows were."<sup>58</sup> This difference of views was often the cause of conflict between Gulzari Lal, Kusum, Sarla Devi and Brij Mohan. Sarla Devi was beyond all pleasure and pain but her brother, Brij Mohan was dead against the divorce till just before the end.

Even Kusum was not all modern. She understood the mentality of the Indian who was always very attached to its own customs and traditions. Industrialisation had given a spurt to the formation of nuclear families and also various problems - physical as well as psychological - connected with it. Even though she was moved with selfish motives, her argument contained the essence of truth and understanding:

It is all very well to say one must be modern and do away with the old joint-family system, but it is not so easy. Our girls are used to living in the joint family and to have many people about them and an older woman to direct

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58. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Get Ready for Battle, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1981, p. 35.

them. This is how things are done in our country. We cannot be modern only because it is written in the newspapers.<sup>59</sup>

The character of Summi is also used to show the conflict of the two cultures. Under the influence of Gautam and Vishnu she tries to put up a front that was modern and emancipated, but deep inside her was the orthodox Indian woman. She dared to go with her two male friends to the bazar but could not defend herself when her conduct was questioned by the traditional womanhood in the person of Mala and Summi's sister. All her modernity and freedom is laid aside and she even feels quite happy, to Gautam's surprize, when she comes to know about the settling of her marriage to a man she had never seen.

This hotch-potch of the East and the West is the order of the day and all who can not flow with the stream, all who pose a resistance to this type of society, and all who stick to their idealism at all costs are made to drift aside and left there, so to think, to rot in the backwaters of the society. Gautam is one such example.

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59. Ibid., pp.33-34.



He tries to fight against industrialism and the wasteful westernization of common masses. He says:

Once they were happy enough to sit on the floor and keep their possessions in a good stout trunk. But now: chairs they must have, almira's they must have! It is all such a waste and also slavish imitation of ways foreign to us.<sup>60</sup>

He wants land to build an ideal school, but that is used by Joginder to build his industry on. In the end he utterly fails in the world's eyes. He fails even to persuade Summi, who had been his ideal student till now, from marrying a person not of her own choice. But his spirit is still green and he is ready to start life afresh. Sarla Devi is another example of ideal thoughts who achieves nothing but is not yet dejected with life and always has someone to give succour to. Gautam and Sarla Devi are portrayed as strong and vibrant characters.

On the other hand, all people like Vishnu, Mrs. Bhatnagar, Kusum, Gulzari Lal and a whole lot of other mammon-worshippers who run after materialism and superficial westernism continue their own kind of

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60. Ibid., p. 56.

struggle up the path which is known to be full of ups and downs containing no permanent happiness or satisfaction.

In fact both the kinds fail in the end where the world and practicality are concerned because of their extreme natures. While one is the extreme, perverted form of a 'Yogi', the other is the extreme perverted form of the "Babbitt". Both kinds are unsuitable for this world. H. Moore Williams has understood such characters of Jhabvala and said :

The tragedy of modern India as depicted in Jhabvala's novels is the total failure of communication between the Babbitt and the Yogi.<sup>61</sup>

Jhabvala wants to convey through this novel that such divisions of society into the ultra-modern, money-minded people and the devoted social workers that see through the shallow souls of, so to say, modern and open-minded characters, "take the society backward to a

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61. H.W.Moore, 'The Yogi and The Babbitt : Themes and Characters of the New India in the Novels of R.P.Jhabvala, "Twentieth Century Literature", 15 (July 1969) ,pp. 89-90.

terrible social niggardliness"<sup>62</sup> that cannot be done away with unless there is a free and genuine flow of ideas between the two classes. The two of them should meet without any pretensions at a common platform. Only then can there be a harmonious intercourse and a resolution of the conflict and hatred existing at present between the two.

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62. R.G. Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p.51.

(f) A BACKWARD PLACE

This novel of Jhabvala sets a new trend in her works as it is very different from the ones preceding it. It is not like the others, about a few upper, middle or lower class families trying to sort out their social problems. Here, the main characters are of the west and not Indian. They are even more in number than the Indian ones. No more importance is given to the relationship of Indians with each other or the conflict between westernised Indians and the traditional ones. The novel has completely shifted its emphasis, which is now more on Europeans living in India and their relationship with the Indians as well as with each other. Also, their different views and reactions, which are sparked off at their contact with the Indians, as well as their adjustment problems in India are noted down in a very matter of fact way.

Jhabvala feels that India begins to bear down heavily upon most of the Europeans if they stay long in India. All of them have different views - some bitter the others pleasant depending upon their duration of stay in India and the circumstances they have to put up with in this place of aliens. In her introduction to An Experience of India. Jhabvala has explained the

cycle through which a Westerner passes in India:

First stage, tremendous enthusiasm - everything Indian marvellous; second stage, everything Indian not so marvellous; third stage, everything Indian abominable. For some people it ends there, for others the cycle renews itself and goes on.<sup>63</sup>

According to the cycle Jhabvala seems to have reached the second stage and is moving towards the third in this novel of hers. Her very first stage was evident in her first two novels when she took delight in pointing out the minutest idiosyncrasies of Indian culture. As a result, the novels were swift and light. Gradually, with the setting in of the second stage the novels become heavy with irony and the third stage brought sarcasm and criticism along with it. There is a sneer in the tone and language of discussion which often moves on the philosophical level and is incomprehensible to the simple, practical minded person. Disillusionment about the 'marvellous' India and realisation about its 'backwardness' was responsible for Jhabvala's gradual graduation to the

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63. R.P.Jhabvala, An Experience of India, London: John Murray, 1971, p. 7.

second and third stage of the cycle. She writes:

The most salient fact about India is that it is very poor and backward. There are so many other things to be said about it but this must remain the basis of all of them. We may praise Indian democracy , go into raptures over Indian music, admire Indian intellectuals - but whatever we say, not for one moment should we lose sight of the fact that a very great number of Indians never get enough to eat... can one lose sight of that fact? God knows, I've tried.<sup>64</sup>

So have her characters in 'A Backward Place'. Judy cuts short Sudhir's visualization of the glittering scene and high society at the professional theatre by:

Yes, I know, and all this while millions are starving.<sup>65</sup>

Clarissa at least pretends to be concerned about the masses living in the villages but Etta has no sympathy with the 'backward' Indians at all. Instead, she is

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64. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, 'Myself in India' in An Experience of India p. 8.

65. Ruth P. Jhabvala, A Backward Place, Delhi : John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1965, p.71.

contemptuous of them. She keeps asking Judy how could she be happy and peaceful with her 'uncivilized' Indian family. She said to Judy once:

The trouble is you've forgotten what it's like to be civilized . To wear decent clothes - go to theatres - concerts - drink wine with meals.<sup>66</sup>

Here Jhabvala has also satirized Etta's concept of being 'civilized'. For her only material things mattered and human relationships and such other bonds meant nothing. Her life itself is a reflection of her thoughts. She left her own motherland, where she was not very well off, so that she could live comfortably in India with her Indian husband. After that she divorced and married several times and even after staying for such a long time in India she could not develop any kind of love for it. She felt herself to have been 'encaged' and 'rotting' in India that was nothing short of 'hell' for her and from which she was not equipped enough to escape. The novel says:

Yet it was a cage that was necessary to her and out of which she would not break even if she

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66. Ibid., p. 215.

could: for outside lay the dusty landscape, the hot sun, the vultures, the hovels and shacks and the people in rags that lived till some dirty disease carried them off.<sup>67</sup>

But the problem with her was not only that of escaping from India. She was worried about her identity as well. India was no place for her now as she was getting old and therefore, less attractive to rich and handsome young Indian men. At the same time she felt that if she went to Europe she would lose her identity again as over there she would be one of the many blondes. At least in India she still could command some respect and admiration for her white skin. All this made her quite irritable and sarcastic sometimes.

Etta was not at all comfortable in India and, therefore, wondered how could Judy, being a thorough English, adjust so well with the old, traditional, lower-middle class joint family of Bal. Her superiority complex made her contemptuous of Judy and her ways. That is why, whenever she met Judy she tried to brainwash her into leaving Bal, and his house which

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67. Ibid., p. 212.



she considered to be a slum. Etta once said:

Marriages, my dear, are made to be broken, that's one of the rules of modern civilization. Just because we happen to have landed ourselves in this primitive society, that's no reason, why we should submit to their primitive morality.<sup>68</sup>

She thinks that Judy should not condescend to sink down to the level of the backward Indians. On the other hand she advises Judy to attempt "to raise them up to ours"<sup>69</sup>. What conceited ideas Etta has of belonging to a superior, 'modern civilization'. Her snootiness could not have been more evident in any other part of the novel. Etta herself being drowned by the Indian culture could not genuinely understand how Judy could merge herself with the Hindu civilization. Although Clarissa herself has a wide gap between her thoughts and actions, she does often make very apt remarks. Unlike Etta, she understands Judy's situation well. She says:

Not poor Judy at all ! She's doing very nicely.

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68. Ibid., p.1.

69. Ibid., p. 8.

She had the good sense to realise that the only way to live here was to turn herself into a real Indian wife.<sup>70</sup>

In the novel only Judy , among other foreigners living in India, could get comfortably adjusted in her Indian family and the Indian climate. It is seen that her yielding to the Indian culture and Bal's family is reciprocated in the same manner which results in a complete harmony, thus giving her stability and peace. In 'Myself in India' Jhabvala says:

To live in India and be at peace one must to a very considerable extent become Indian and adopt Indian attitudes, habits, beliefs, assume if possible an Indian personality.<sup>71</sup>

Judy's western thought intermingle in a very healthy manner with the Indian thoughts resulting in a mixture which contains the good of both the cultures. She is educated, is of an independent mind and has a relationship of equality and friendship with her husband. As she thinks that her husband is going on

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70. Ibid., p.25.

71. R.P.Jhabvala, "Myself in India", An Experience of India, London: John Murray, 1971, p.19.

the wrong path in wagging his tail after Kishan Kumar, she oppose him. But her opposition is in such a manner that does not enrage Bal or make matters worse for both of them. She was no blind follower of her husband but tried to persuade him, as a co-equal, not to go to Bombay. It is another matter that in the end she thought it better to give in to his dreams and be ready to suffer whatever comes their way. Likewise, she had been brought up in the manner of a person who does not depend on others for food and lodging. As her husband could not earn, she stepped out of the house, in spite of the scenes created by Bal, and began searching for work. On the other hand, Judy had the great Indian qualities of adjustment and open-mindedness. Her contact with Bhujaji changed her attitude towards God:

Judy starts believing in Bhujaji and in all that she does. As an English woman Judy feels restless and worried about the future, but soon adopts the Indian attitude of leaving things to God. Like Bhujaji, she too starts saying "God provides."<sup>72</sup>

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72. R.G.Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala : A Study of Her Fiction, New Delhi : Sterling Publishers, 1990, p. 58.

For the Hochstadts the situation is different. They know that they are not bound to stay in India for more than two years.

Therefore, their first stage persists for a little longer time. They do not feel themselves to be as prisoners like Etta felt. The Hochstadts sit snug and keep theorizing about the meeting of East and West. A fine example of it is:

'How often have I thought; said Mrs. Hochstadt, 'that a serious comparative study of Indian and Western spiritual achievements will widen the horizons of both the one and the other.'<sup>73</sup>

Their knowledge is shallow and, therefore, whatever argument they build on it seems to be only a hypocrisy. Their talks are high flown and words comprising it, often meaningless. Shahane says:

This exposure of hypocrisy need not be confined to a small segment of Europeans but can also be extended to include the westernised, educated Indians. Dr. Hochstadt beams with the new comer's enthusiasm for India when he talks of

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73. R.P.Jhabvala, A Backward Place, New Delhi: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1965 p.106.

'correlation' as the most interesting aspect of this great country's civilization. He speaks not only of physical facts but also intellectual and spiritual ones - 'the correlation of the old and the new , of what has been and what is -' This phrase seems to fit into the rhetoric of the patriotic, educated Indian of our post - independence Establishment.<sup>74</sup>

Mrs. Kaul and Sudhir are examples of such westernized Indians who are verbose about their patriotism etc., but in fact mean nothing. They are far removed from practical life and keep theorizing like the Hochstadts who say:

Life plays itself out to a different rhythm here... It is fatal to come to India and expect to be able to live to a Western rhythm.... The West pushes forward in stoccato rhythm... the east repeats the same note over and over, - dom, dom, dom... over and over, and again and again, reaching not forward but down, down into depth.<sup>75</sup>

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74. V.A.Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, pp. 78-79.

75. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A Backward Place, New Delhi : John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1965, p. 32.

But it is only Judy who is able to realise it unconsciously and put it into practice. She had in fact 'merged' herself with the Indian ethos and felt very homely in it:

Judy could not imagine ever being that lonely here. In the end, there was always the sky.<sup>76</sup>

Unlike Judy, Clarissa always pretended to have empathy with India but this superficial layer gets disturbed at the slightest provocation. An example of it is when Clarissa slaps the poor beggar boy who dared to touch her leg.

Thus, according to Shahane:

The problem that India, as a stark reality or as a spiritual reality, presents to a European evokes different responses. The reactions may assume the forms of affirmation or negation or ambivalence. All these areas of emotive and intellectual responses to this country are endowed with fictional art in A Backward Place.<sup>77</sup>

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76. Ibid., p.222.

77. V.A.Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p.73.

Through the arguments and practices of the various foreigners in India Jhabvala seems to consider all possible ways of reaction of the Westerners to the Indian climate , thus in this way trying herself to sort out her own problem of adjustment . Jhabvala had by this time reached the third stage of her stay in India and,therefore, was trying to consider the various paths still open for her. She had the option to merge with the Eastern culture like Judy did after being fully acquainted with the backwardness of India, or pretend to do so, like Clarissa. Like Etta she could continue living in India as a prisoner and every day feel more and more stifled or like the Hochstadts scoot to England, thus making a timely escape. With an open mind Jhabvala considers all pros and cons of the various possibilities lying before her and ends the novel on an indefinite but a hopeful note.

About this hope of a better future which is so well portrayed in the characters of Bal and Judy. Shahane says:

He and Judy both demonstrate the sense of hope and resilience in human character confronted with the flux of life, the sense that every dark cloud has a silver lining and that man must

continue to dream and weave a web of fantasy in the hope that this dream may one day be transformed into reality. Thus, Bal's spirited enthusiasm is silhouetted against the image of India as a backward place, an area of darkness dotted with rays of hope for the future.<sup>78</sup>

Even the Hochstadts who were fast moving towards the second and the third stage and a final return to their home could still feel a hope for India that was entering the age of renaissance:

... that new India, which strove to bring itself in line with the most highly developed technical achievements of the twentieth century and yet retain its own culture: its art, its religion, its philosophy... which had ever been, and would ever be, an inspiration to all the world.<sup>79</sup>

This hope bears witness to the fact that Jhabvala, in spite of her reaching the very third stage when everything Indian seems abominable, is still

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78. Ibid., p.83.

79. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A Backward Place, New Delhi : John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1965, p. 235.



appreciative of the Indian culture which has nothing to do with any material advancement. The West cannot even dream of vying with the art, the religion and the philosophy of the East. It is far superior and beyond the ken of most of the Europeans. Very few understand it and still fewer put them into practice. But this does not mean that the future of Indian culture is bleak.

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(g) A NEW DOMINION

The hope with which the last novel ends is taken up by the next novel, A New Dominion. We find Europeans groping in the dark depths of art, religion, and philosophy of India hoping to get to the bottom of truth but in the end reaching nowhere unfortunately.

Perhaps this is so because first, they do not have the correct perspectives themselves, and secondly, they by chance keep falling into the hands of fake sadhus and sanyasis. Still their hope of searching the truth is not extinguished. Even after Margaret's death and the Swami's exploitation of Lee, she was hopeful of her re-union with the swami and with the continuation of her search . Likewise Lee was under the misconception that a true merger of the cultures could take place by making love with the Indian who could be said to be a representative of the great Indian crowd that she could see from the Hotel window.

The focus of Cross cultural conflict, with the writing of A New Dominion, shifted from the social field entirely to the spiritual one.' In A Backward Place Europeans registered their feelings about India and its art, religion and philosophy but they were not

personally involved with this abstract aspect of India. In this novel the abstractness gains ground and the society is pushed into a background. All the characters, be it Indian or European, are involved knee-deep in the finer aspects of India. India is now looked upon as the 'promised land' where a person could find solution to all problems of life. According to Shahane:

India is no longer conceived in negative or pejorative terms, but rather in positive and adulatory terms - as an ancient country with a rich heritage of philosophical thought and spiritual insights, challenging, provoking, inviting and inspiring three eager - to - learn western girls, Lee, Evie and Margaret. India is evocative, inspiring, fulfilling and frustrating and all this at the same time in this novel.<sup>80</sup>

The characters in the novel are very rarely exposed to the society and wherever they are then either the character itself, like Asha, shows disregard for its views and takes all opportunity to humiliate it or the author herself puts on a sarcastic tone to criticise it

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80. V.A.Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p. 113.

to the full. Jhabvala cannot put up with the hypocrisy of rich Indians trying to copy the western culture. Politicians who ought to remain with the masses whom they represent in order to understand their problems, live in palaces and think of the poor only in times of elections. M.Ps. and Cabinet Ministers as well as Rao Saheb, who is a budding politician himself, are far removed from reality. They can take out little time for their electorate. The sarcasm on such politicians is most prominent when Rao Sahib is described to have come out of his mercedes car and entered the poor man's abode to beg for vote.

The novel, however, does not concentrate on society. It is about the reactions of western characters such as Raymond, Miss Charlotte, Evie, Margaret and Lee, who have come to India for some reason on the other. Raymond is a tourist, and tries his best to remain so without getting into any kind of emotional contact with the Indians. He also as Shahane puts:

... cannot come to terms with the spirit of India; to him she is only a great panorama and a historical curiosity.<sup>81</sup>

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81. Ibid., p. 115.

Although he is swept off his feet by the innocent Gopi, he keeps himself 'controlled', in the words of Lee. He does not let his heart overpower his rational mind. This makes it easy for him to criticize the various actions of the Indians, especially the spiritual gurus, with a completely detached view unlike that of Lee, Margaret and Evie. He goes to the Ashram of Swamiji, makes friends with him but refuses to accept him as his Guru. He is not charmed by every action of Swamiji as the three girls are, nor is Raymond ready to be 'broken' by him as Margaret and Evie are already. The two girls have lost their will in the will of the Swami. Evie's total surrender can be known by the fact that she accepted even the wrong spelling of 'transience'. Whereas she and Lee could enjoy reading the manuscript of Swamiji even when they were aware of the illness of Margaret, Raymond could not concentrate on it. When Swamiji gave him the manuscript to hold, Raymond felt like flinging it away. His mind was occupied with the worry of how to persuade Margaret who was suffering from jaundice, and the others to take her to a hospital. But the Swami had totally hypnotised them and even Miss Charlotte could not force Margaret to be taken to the hospital. While Margaret was dying Swamiji was enjoying witnessing the

blind faith that he had been able to create in the three girls for himself . His indirect argument against Margaret's going to the hospital was:

Everything must be experienced to the end. This is true for a dog as for a man as for a bud on a tree. Everything must unfold and ripen. There is sunshine and gentle breezes and there is rain and bitter storms. We must accept and enjoy, or accept and endure, as the case may be. Because we need both enjoyment and endurance, both sun and storm, so that we may ripen into our fullest possibility. Isn't it wonderful that even a dog should be allowed to grow into such ripeness ! And if for a dog, then how much more for a human being.<sup>82</sup>

The above argument was in fact given when Raymond wanted to put to rest an injured and dying stray dog crying with pain near the Ashram. This was also an indirect hint for Margaret and her illness. Raymond was perplexed and could not, however he tried, gulp the fact down his throat that how could such educated young ladies support such an illogical argument of the Swami.

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82. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A New Dominion, Great Britain: Grafton Books, 1983, p. 159.

Raymond could also see through the motherly love of Banubai for Gopi. When he witnessed the 'Leela' of Banubai feeding Gopi with her own hands he did not feel 'privileged' as the disciples of Banubai felt:

... in fact, he was embarrassed and did not like to look at the charming tableau being enacted on the bed but stared in frowning concentration at the tips of his own feet.<sup>83</sup>

The only place where Raymond was involved emotionally was in his relationship with Gopi. He was attracted to Gopi in a manner which could not have been anything else but unfruitful in the end. Raymond was characterised by Jhabvala as a homosexual, probably because she strongly believed that there could not be a natural and normal relationship possible between the two opposite cultures. Or, the other explanation could have been that she wanted to signify that in the field of religion, art and philosophy, to which this book gives all importance, there is nothing for the west to contribute to the East. On the contrary, the West, has only to 'learn' and 'take' from India for its own benefit. In the end Gopi, after giving his

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83. Ibid., p. 154.

friendship to Raymond comes out of the relationship and, like Hari Sahni of To Whom the Will, surrenders to the fate, which was his large united family, to settle his marriage.

Raymond also makes many observations about the Eastern culture in the letters to his mother. He realises that the East is not as sensitive to human rights. It does not treat the servants as human beings having any self respect. Whereas Gopi has no qualms about hitting Shyam, Raymond is remorseful. He also notices that the Indians are often curious to know intimate details about others. The reserved Englishman is often shocked by this attitude of the Indians.

Miss Charlotte is another English character who works for the Indians without getting emotionally attached to them. However, her selfless social work is not appreciated by the selfish politicians of the post Independence era.

Other than these 'rational' western characters, many irrational ones also make their appearance. They are diametrically opposed to the scientific way of thinking. The three girls - Margaret, Evie and Lee rebel against westernism and come to India with a



resolution already formed in their minds to get hold of a guru for their spiritual advancement. Shahane aptly observes :

Whereas Raymond and Miss Charlotte embody the rational, scientific and moral aspects of the culture of the west Lee, Margaret and Evie represent a sort of dissatisfaction with it. These three girls are weary of the western way of life, its machine ridden society, its materialistic trend and its commercial stodginess. Their reaction is not purely negative, one of dissatisfaction and protest, but it is also positive in the sense that they crave the experience of spiritually rich India, her god-men, her swamis who, they feel, will bring succour to their tormented soul, transform them into new beings and provide a life governed by the unity of mind, body and soul.<sup>84</sup>

But as they themselves are not clear about the meaning of spiritual advancement they easily fall prey to hypocrisy. According to Shahane:

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84. V.A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi : Arnold - Heinemann, 1976, p. 115-116.

The Swamiji is indeed a spiritual gasbag, a moral humbug and a religious bounder. He promptly claims the bodies of women, has no qualms either moral or religious and in fact becomes agent of Margaret's ruin and death.<sup>85</sup>

Lee had embarked on a journey to "lose herself in order to find herself"<sup>86</sup>. But she very innocently kept mistaking, 'simple bodily pleasure' for 'the joy of spiritual merger',<sup>87</sup> till the end. The novel does not unfold the story of Lee to the end but gives only the hint where this predicament of hers would lead her. Lee's end can be predicted to be very much like that of Margaret because of the wrong track she has adopted.

The character of Asha is very different from the other characters discussed till now. But she can be said to be a very close Indian version of Etta of A Backward Place. Both are spoilt as well as afraid to lose their youth. But Asha's character is very much elaborately unfolded before us. Her role in the novel

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85. Ibid., p.119.

86. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A New Dominion, Great Britain : Grafton Books, 1983, p.10.

87. V.A.Shahane, Ruth P. Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann , 1976, p. 122.

is only to make Raymond suffer by her off and on relationships with Gopi. She also acts as a link between rest of the characters.

To end with, Shahane says:

If A New Dominion is considered a novel, of not merely a few individuals thrown together, but of a country in a moment of the meeting of two different cultures, it is disappointing in respect of its failure to measure up to this ideal.<sup>88</sup>

But how can we overlook the fact that the two cultures in fact are meeting in the persons of Raymond, Miss Charlotte, Evie, Lee and Margaret who represent the western rational and the western rebel; and in the persons of Gopi, Asha, Rao Saheb, his wife Sunita, Swamiji and Banubai who, although do not well represent their country, are basically Indians. Even though these characters are an entity unto themselves, they are also very much representing their own cultures. Otherwise, why would have the western characters been so differently affected by the spirituality of India than the eastern ones. India overwhelms them in this novel as well as in A Backward Place and in Heat and Dust.

(h) HEAT AND DUST

We can introduce this novel with the lines of R.G. Agarwal who has taken an overall view of the themes of Heat and Dust as well as of the two novels preceding it - all having a different subject matter from the earlier ones:

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That India overwhelms Westerners is the theme of the last three novels of Jhabvala. In A Backward Place Jhabvala asks why westerners are in India and how and why India acts on them variously . It lets go the Hochstadts because they are here for a short while and are not seriously involved in India, but it destroys Etta, who tries to resist it and keep her own European identity . It also bruises Clarisse, who feigns love for its spirituality. In A New Dominion India overwhelms Lee, Evie and Margaret Unlike Etta who comes out to India because of a chance marriage , these women come out to India to 'find themselves'. In Heat and Dust Jhabvala describes how India overwhelms two English women who are sensitive and receptive to it.<sup>89</sup>

This novel also studies the reaction of

Europeans to India and India's 'Heat and Dust'. There are some who strongly resist any contact with it. They have strong curtains to keep away the 'heat' and 'dust' as long as they are on the plains. But when in summers its intensity increases and curtains can no longer withhold the heat and dust, such Europeans escape to Simla till a better climate descends upon the plains. It does not occur to them that taking any pains to understand India would be interesting. Most Europeans are of such kind. Mrs Crawford and Mrs. Minnies also come under this category. They call themselves 'tough old hens' as they had all their lives been fighting against the influences of India. Here, 'heat' and 'dust' well represent India as these are 'the two things which a European, used to a cool and clean climate, invariably dislikes and sometimes abhors' <sup>90</sup> For a foreigner the 'heat' of India is further enflamed by its exotic strange and peculiar setting. The nawab, his gay parties, his involvement with the dacoits, the incidence of riots at Khatm and the Sati, the hijras, the elaborate attire and jewellery of the ladies in Nawab's 'zanaan khana' - all sold up to the strangeness of India and it becomes more and more intriguing to them. Mrs. Saunders, wife of

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90. V.A.Shahane, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p. 130.

the doctor, relates 'heat' with 'sex' and is "very susceptible to the fear of an imaginary sexual onslaught" . Although she is ill Mrs. Saunders is afraid of lying in bed as she thinks that her servants might get ideas because:

They're very excitable, its' their constitution. I've heard their spicy food's got something to do with it - I wouldn't know if there is any truth in that but of this I'm sure, Mrs. Rivers: they've got only one thought in their heads and that' to you- know- what with a white woman.<sup>91</sup>

Another such character who has wrong notions or only superficial knowledge of India is the English neighbour of the narrator on her arrival at Bombay who gives the narrator tips of how to stay in India without falling sick or being robbed by ill. Such close characters every day further pull themselves into their own cocoon, shutting all communications with the intensely hot and exciting India. Douglas also was one of those who kept themselves aloof from all influences. The only difference was that he gave a logical reason for

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91. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Heat and Dust, Great Britain: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1975, p. 119.

his behaviour. His argument was that as English were the rulers and Indian the ruled discrimination between the two was necessary "to preserve the identity of the English in India."<sup>92</sup>

These Europeans who could manage to resist all the alluring aspects of India and to remain in their shells till it was time for them to leave for England can be said to have been a determined lot. Major Minnies did to some extent understand India and therefore attempted to describe the appropriate kind of reaction a foreigner ought to have towards India:

He said that one had to be very determined to withstand - to stand up to - India. And the most vulnerable, he said, are always those who love her best.... India always, he said, finds out the weak spots and presses on it.... for the Major this weak spot is to be found in the most sensitive, often the finest people - and, moreover, in their finest feelings. It is there that India seeks them out and pulls them over into what the major called the other

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92. R.G. Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala : A Study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p.76.

dimension.... Yes, concluded the Major, it is all very well to love and admire India intellectually, aesthetically, he did not mention sexually but he must have been aware of that factor too- but always with a virile, measured, European feeling. One should never, he warned, allow oneself to become softened (like Indians), by an excess of feeling; because the moment that happens - the moment one exceeds one's measure - one is in danger of being dragged over to the other side.<sup>93</sup>

But Olivia and her grand daughter, the English girl and her young man, Chidananda and Harry - all are of a very different lot. They do not make a virtue of keeping aloof, Instead, they willingly give in to the charms of India. They have an eagerness to explore and understand it. However, the young man and the English girl, who had come in search of spirituality with an open mind and heart, find themselves to be suffering from over-exposure to the Indian 'heat' and 'dust'. The girl's disillusionment was reflected in her reply to the narrator who wanted to know her purpose of coming to India:

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93. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Heat and Dust, Great Britain: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1975, pp.170-71.



"To find peace" She laughed grimly : "But all I found was dysentery."<sup>94</sup>

To which the young man added:

That's all anyone ever finds here.<sup>95</sup>

The two had lost all enthusiasm after passing through a gruelling experience in India. They had been robbed, cheated, molested quarrelled with, suffered jaundice and contracted ring worm and now were plagued with dysentery. Suffering had affected the pretty face of the girl and it had become mean and clenched. But Chidananda, being a bit more thick skinned, although equally exposed to the intensity of India, is not blown off his feet immediately. A few days later, the narrator finding him ailing and emaciated took pity and gave shelter to him. He has not been portrayed by the author as being as sensitive towards India as Olivia and her grand daughter were, and therefore he is unable to imbibe anything purely Indian. Although Chidananda has come to search about the philosophical truth which is the essence of India, he has no understanding of the country - though this does not suggest that Olivia and

her grand daughter understood India fully. Chidananda has donned an orange robe but missed the spirit behind it. Contrary to the orders of his guru, he often writes home for money and seeks shelter at night cheap hotels. Moreover, like the characters in A New Dominion Chidananda also mistakes physical merger with the spiritual one. According to Shahane:

Sexual appetite is most intricately compounded with religious or spiritual pursuit in Heat and Dust.<sup>96</sup>

For such confused characters Jhabvala lays no hope.

Olivia is another character who is very sympathetic towards India. She can be said to be stronger than Chidananda but weaker than her grand daughter. At first she had tried, like others, to shut herself against the 'heat' and 'dust' of India but felt stifled. Consequently, she rebelliously, unlike her co-Europeans, opened the doors and windows to become receptive to the Indian climate. She rebelled against the custom of going to the hills for summers, as well as fought against the English group that talked of

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96. V.A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, p. 134.

interfering with the traditions of India, howsoever heinous. She found herself even supporting the practice of Sati. R.G. Agarwal attempts an explanation of Olivia's unique reactions:

Her sympathy for the Nawab is part of her attitude to the Natives which is radically different from that of the others in her community . This sympathy is partly a result of her innate goodness and partly a consequence of her ignorance of the people and customs of India.<sup>97</sup>

It is said that India gradually begins to bear upon "those who love her best." This is what began happening with Olivia also. She found India exciting and the Nawab even more so. She could not see through the wily Nawab and therefore, fell in his trap and was in the end "dragged over to the other side". Before the Nawab took Olivia he had been telling her of the disgusting and bloody revenge taken by his ancestor on a Marwar prince who had displeased him. The English had displeased the Nawab and he was tired of their

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97. R.G. Agarwal, Ruth Praver Jhabvala: A Study of Her Fiction, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990, p. 71.

dictations which had also deeply hurt his ego. R.G. Agarwal has very aptly related the story of the ancestor and the Marwar Prince with the story of Olivia and the Nawab. In both the stories the family of the Nawab is seen taking revenge on person or race that has insulted it:

The conquest of Olivia is for him, as far his ancestor Amanullah Khan, a subtle way of avenging himself on the English community.... What the Nawab does to Olivia is not very different from what Amanullah did to his guests. Olivia becomes pregnant by the Nawab, undergoes a painful abortion and deserts the English camp. From this point onwards, she recedes to the background of the Nawabi's ~~zan~~ ankhanah. What happens to her there is only a matter for guess. She spends her last days somewhere in the Himalayas.<sup>98</sup>

The narrator confesses that "India changes people, and I have been no exception."<sup>99</sup> This is true only of the people who open themselves upto the influences of the winds of the country. Olivia opened

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98. Ibid., pp. 72-73.

99. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Heat and Dust, Great

herself up but could not bear with the intensity of it in the end. She gave herself to be aborted and spent the rest of her life in oblivion. But the narrator is a stronger person. She leaves all protection behind and exposes herself fully to the 'heat' and 'dust' of India . She lives with a typical Indian lower middle-class family and sets her room in the Indian way, to the great disappointment of Inder Lal. This closeness with the Indians make her observations very appropriate and true. She notices the quiet, undemanding, subdued wife of Inder Lal and his bossing , shrewd and scrutinizing mother. She observes the victorian mentality of Indians, the tailor who measures her from a distance, the over populated houses and streets and buses packed to bursting point, the dirty, ineffecient offices that are a marked contrast to the function they fulfilled as residence areas during the time of the English. She however, does not still fully understand the superstitions and traditions of India that even though repelling leave a 'lingering smell of sweetness and decay',<sup>100</sup>. The earthy culture of India, with belief in customs that help impregnating a woman, with midwives in every nook and corner and their crude

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100. Ibid., p. 14.

but effective ways of abortion is well described by the narrator as she has observed it all on a very close range.

The narrator also goes through almost the same experience that her grandmother went through. Like her grandmother she also got pregnant as a result of her visit to Baba Firdaus shrine. Inder Lal even made the same joke that the Nawab made earlier when he had gone with Olivia about 'what had happened here on the original Husband's Wedding Day to make the barren wife pregnant'.<sup>101</sup> But the similarity in their experiences goes no further. They take to different paths in accordance with the strength they possess. Olivia is weaker than her grand daughter and therefore, gets ready for abortion, whereas the grand daughter braces herself up to bear the child. Of course, the times they live in is also responsible for the decisions they take. Although India itself has remained the same throughout, the attitude of British has undergone a sea-change. Therefore, the narrator is able to very bravely accept the responsibility for her action and decides to have her child up in the Himalayas which is also a symbol of spiritual strength as well as mystery of India.

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101. Ibid., pp. 127-128.

Finally , to sum it up in Shahane's words:

Heat and Dust is a skilfully manipulated picture of princely India silhouetted against an equally deftly drawn picture of modern India, and both these parallels are presented from the European point of view.<sup>102</sup>

This kind of presentation of the different view points and reactions of Europeans in India occurs for the last time in this novel as the locale hereafter shifts from India to the other side of the world.

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102. V.A. Shahane, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi : Arnold-Heinemann, 1976, pp. 140-41.

(i) IN SEARCH OF LOVE AND BEAUTY

In Search of Love and Beauty is not like her earlier novels as it takes off from a different plane altogether. First of all, the scene of action is changed. Then, in the interim period, since her last novel was published and the present novel, Jhabvala's life has also experienced a sea change. She is divorced from her husband and India and has settled in the opposite corner of the world, that is to say, in New York. Over there she is faced by an absolutely different culture. Now Jhabvala's novels begin to portray the American society in which she is presently moving.

But, is it possible for her to make a complete break from her past? Indeed, it is not that easy for her or, for that matter, for any other person to forget the past that is connected with the country in which he has lived for the last twenty five years. Even if she wanted to she could not have moved away from India which had already made an indelible mark on her psyche. The only distance she could manage was to shift the position of India from a central one to a corner one. India is reduced to the status of being just one of the many locales in the novel. In Jhabvala's last two



novels the society has turned to be a Western one in which India keeps making inroad to influence the lives of the Westerners. In this way Jhabvala has tried to combine her "three backgrounds "<sup>103</sup> European, Indian and American. This intermixing or making the three different cultures come face to face has now become her only aspiration . Jhabvala's ambition is fully realised in her next novel, Three Continents. In Search of Love and Beauty, though laid in America has quite a few characters from India as well while Europe is just referred to. Thus there is an obvious interaction between America and India.

In this novel, India makes a quiet entry into the American world and gradually begins to take hold of their very lives. Leo Kellermann slinks into America through Europe as a penniless refugee. He takes advantage of "psychological weakness"<sup>104</sup> of the Americans and insidiously worms his way through them to carve out a place for himself in their land with their help. Although penniless, Leo had a personality which attracted all, especially women. They, one by

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103. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, interviewed by Patricia W. Mooney: "Another Dimension of Living," Newsweek, 31 October 1977.

104. Yasmine Goonaratne, "Apollo, Krishna, Superman: The Image of India in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Ninth Novel", Essays on Poetry and Fiction, edited by S.N.A. Rizvi, Delhi: Doaba House, 1988, p.33.

one, fall into his trap like Raymond, Lee and Asha did in A New Dominion. They fell into the traps laid down by Swamiji and Gopi . The women in In Search of Love and Beauty are "willing victims, who joyfully open their hearts and homes to the predator"<sup>105</sup> By their help Leo establishes himself as a spiritual leader although he himself is not so evolved so as to be leading such a crowd of men and women . We can see that Leo is full of weaknesses himself. He is all the time still experimenting various influences upon himself. The only plus point he has is that he is adept in diagnosing a persons' weaknesses. By doing so he lays the trap into which the person walks in by himself.<sup>5</sup> The person is willingly seduced into the trap as he wants to improve himself and he thinks that Leo has the power and method which would help him do so. The person, moreover, never wants to be disillusioned as he gradually falls desperately in love with Leo. Jhabvala, while describing Leo in the novel, herself once clearly confessed this nature of Leo:

He thought he knew what was good for people better than they did themselves; and he did have a kind of 'insight' which enabled him to see

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105. Ibid., p. 33.

through a person's complexities and diagnose whatever might be wrong there. He was, in that respect, like a really gifted physician - though whether he had such a physician's healing power was something else again.<sup>106</sup>

This makes it evident, that Jhabvala wants to convey to us that Leo never had any healing power in him as his method was to employ the senses to reach the 'Point'. Although he has a high philosophy to preach that "there's an orgasm of the soul" and a "frission takes place there" which is "delicious", his method to put that philosophy into practice is inadequate. On the contrary, Ahmad although he has no philosophy to expound, is moving on the path of the spirit, which is the correct path, and takes help of the senses only to "express" the evolution of the spirit. Jhabvala works to bring about a confrontation of the two men to help us understand them better. After Leo had questioned him about his music if it was of the senses or of the spirit, Jhabvala takes the opportunity of describing Ahmad and explaining his method:

He had no conception of any division between the two, and if he had thought about it, he would

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106     Ibid., p.76.

have said, surely the one is there to express the other? That was what his music was for - he knew this so deeply that he had absolutely no thought or words for it.<sup>107</sup>

So Ahmed never answered such questions of Leo. But instead of perplexing him such behaviour of Ahmed made Leo realise his drawbacks and also cleared his perspective towards his own philosophy and method. Realising the truth Leo would say:

A hundred per cent right. One shouldn't think but be. Not talk but feel, feel, feel.<sup>108</sup>

Goonaratne explains the difference of thoughts and methods between the two cultures. While Ahmed represents the traditional Eastern culture, Leo has become the representative of the Western style of thought and method. It is a different story altogether that he realises his mistake and wants to outgrow it. Goonatre interprets thus:

Ahmed's inability to understand a question that adopts as a first principle the concept of a

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107. Ibid., p.76

108. Ibid., p.76

culture in which the spirit and the senses are on opposite sides of an artistic fence reminds the reader of A New Dominion of the musicians in that novel whose art still survives in an India divided between the forces of spirituality and materialism . Like them, Ahmed is part of an ancient tradition with which the West appears to have lost touch.<sup>109</sup>

Although their method of prosecution of their philosophies is different, their role in the novel is quite similar. Along with Leo, Jhabvala has also classed Ahmed as a predator. While Louisa and Regi are Leo's prime victims, Marietta is Ahmed's victim. Marietta loves him and continues to help him with her money till the last. Whenever he is in New York he uses her and her apartment for his own benefit .

While talking of Marietta we should not forget that she is the only powerful link in the novel between America and India. She has been depicted as a typical 'self seeker' of Jhabvala's novels and discovers Ahmed "and with him India and the particular brand of

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109. Yasmine Goon<sup>na</sup>atne, Silence, Exile and Cunning: The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Orient Longman, Revised edition, 1991, p. 327.

fulfilment to be discovered there"<sup>110</sup>. In her first few visits of India Marietta is thrilled, amused and enthusiastic to know all of it. She liked everything Indian - even the dense smells " of rotting vegetables and more sinister rotting things."<sup>111</sup> Goonaratne says that "Ruth Jhabvala summarises through Marietta's responses to India an aspect of her own relationship with the land in which she lived for twenty five years."<sup>112</sup> The land of India filled Marietta with the initial enthusiasm which all Westerners have in their first stage of contact with it. But Marietta's contact with India was never thorough. She maintained her identity as "She wanted to see everything but as herself, making no attempt to merge with people and landscape."<sup>113</sup> She continued to maintain her Western taste in food and clothes. She was never enchanted by Indian Gurus or their ashrams. Marietta sustained her relationship with India for quite some time on account of her business. But all her enthusiasm for this country vanished in her last visit when India began to

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110. Ibid., p. 22.

111. Ibid., p. 24

112. Yasmine Goonaratne, "Apollo, Krishna, Superman: The Image of India in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Ninth Novel", Essays on Poetry and Fiction, edited by S.N.A.Rizvi, New Delhi: Doaba House, 1988, p.35.

113. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, In Search of Love and Beauty, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984, p.24.

get on her nerves. "She suffered some of the irritations that India holds for its visitors"<sup>114</sup> She felt herself as a foreigner in the country. In fact her maintenance of a deliberate kind of alienation from the Indian culture had driven the people of the country to hostility. They could not bear with her supercilious attitude towards them and so they showed their hatred towards Marietta. The people at the hotel and the beggar children laughed at her foreign-ness and the beggar girl even spat at her. She could bring herself to forget all the insult only when Moota Singh, the doorman of her hotel showed her due respect and "helped her with her parcels ... without ever in the least touching her."<sup>115</sup>

Goonaratne thinks that In Search of Love and Beauty has many similarities with A New Dominion. Both have charlatan Gurus and according to Goonaratne:

It is inevitable that the blending of spiritual and bestial association's in Ruth Jhabvala's characterization of Leo Kellermann should remind readers of her novels of a somewhat similar techniques used by her in building up

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114. Ibid., p.119.

115. Ibid., p. 122.

the personality of another seeming charlatan, Swamiji in her earlier work, A New Dominion.<sup>116</sup>

Leo is described as 'An Apollo ! -A god' as well as an "old monster", a "stranded whale". In the same manner Lee describes her sexual encounter with her guru in "bestial terms" . "Swamiji's ashram parallels Kellermann's Academy and the conversation of both men ambiguously combine spiritual and sexual elements."<sup>117</sup> In both the novels the spiritual self - seekers lay waste their lives in running after and trying to please the charlatan Gurus. Both the Gurus are 'pot-bellied' and very fond of eating and drinking. They have an "air of authority"<sup>118</sup> in them and a tendency to outshine everybody in every society. In fact both have so many similarities that we can say Jhabvala saw in Leo a Western counterpart of the Swamiji of A New Dominion.

To sum up, we can say that although Jhabvala has moved her scene of action to the West, she cannot get

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116. Yasmine Goonaratne, "Apollo, Krishna, Superman: The Image of India in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Ninth Novel;" Essays on Poetry and Fiction, edited by S.N.A.Rizvi, Delhi: Doaba House, 1988, p.38.

117. Ibid., p. 39.

118. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A New Dominion, Great Britain : Grafton Books, 1983, p.144.



over her twenty-five years of experience in the East and her basic endeavour and theme also remain the same, that is to say, to look for loopholes in the water tight compartments of both the cultures so that they could be intermixed in a harmonizing manner with a view to giving birth to a better world order.

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(j) THREE CONTINENTS

While In Search of Love and Beauty tells of a story that takes place mainly in America with India and England getting only a passing mention, Three Continents is located equally in the States, India and England. Another remarkable thing about the novel is its length and a complicated story that unfolds itself step by step in a detective novel - like manner.

Here the story revolves round a spiritual leader and his movement. We have observed that in Jhabvala's writing career the spiritual leaders in the novels are at first innocent and genuine, but gradually they tend to become corrupt and fake. The Guru in The Householder has not been mentioned as a charlatan, but in A New Dominion, he has developed into an exploiter of the Western girls. In Search of Love and Beauty has Leo as a spiritual leader who has no qualms about openly using his women disciple for his own physical pleasure. The language used to describe them and their actions is bestial in the two novels. In Three Continents the image of the spiritual leader is further damaged with the arrival of the Rawul. Unlike in the other novels he occupies all the place in the centre and the story revolves round him. The spiritual

leader is at his worse in the novel. His private life as well as his public life are both impure. He belongs to a royal family of India and has not yet severed all his materialistic relationship like a proper sage should. He still relates himself to the Kingdom of Dhoka. His own wife lives in England while the Rawul lives with another woman, Renee. The Rawul and Renee have an adopted son who is actually the son of a prostitute and has a murky past of his own. His relations with Renee are also suspect. Under the garb of spiritualism they indulge in smuggling. When they come to America they are all after 'Propinquity', the ancestral mansion of Michael and Harriet, the two innocent 'orphans of divorce' who get entangled in the web of the shrewed Eastern characters, the Rawul, Renee and Crishi. Jhabvala always tries to convey through her writings that it is not all Westerners who are caught in the web of charlatry. It is only those men and women who have that type of bent of mind and those who do not have their own firm base to stand on or a firm character of their own to fall back on fall in for such phoney spiritualism on coming into contact with the exotic East. Michael and Harriet were also of such a make. They had never had a happy family life, nor could they be educated or brought up in a normal way. Both of them were dissatisfied with life and they

were always in search for "the real thing" which even they did not know for sure what it was. Probably for Michael it was something that was different from everything American of which he was quite fed up. He had been to the Middle East and the far East and therefore came into contact with its culture and religion. So he had a kind of an inclination towards the mysticism of the East. As Harriet was the twin of Michael she had a symbiotic relationship with him, and so her reactions to the East were also the same. They were both easy prey for the Rawul and his group. Goonaratne observes:

Steeping themselves in mystic literature, they plod away at 'transcending their own egos': easy meet for the Fourth world gang whose message is global but vague."<sup>119</sup>

Harriet has often been compared with Lee of A New Dominion as she was also somewhat light - headed like Lee. Harriet blindly follows her brother and is in love with Crishi who, she thinks, can do no wrong as he has "noble motives for everything he does."<sup>120</sup> Goonaratne has made a comparison between the two

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119. Yasmine Goonaratne, Silence, Exile and Cunning: The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Orient Longman, Revised edition 1991, pp.332-333.

120. Ibid., p. 333.

novels, Three Continents and A New Dominion. She says that 'Three Continents "resembles A New Dominion in its 3-part structure, its themes of religious, cultural and sexual exploitation, and even in many of its characterisations."<sup>121</sup>

After having married Harriet and holding Michael fully in their grip the group waited for the day when the twins would turn twenty-one and inherit "Propinquity". Blind in her love for Crishi, Harriet was made to suffer a lot. She had to bare the neglect of her husband and even share the bed with Renee. She also had to share Crishi with her homosexual brother. Both the twins could not discover the villainy of Crishi till it was too late. Michael had to lose his life in spite of the resistance he put up and Harriet was made to write a fake note in her brother's hand to hide the murder that her husband had committed'. In this manner the conflict that Michael was creating, after he had found out the truth, was quietened and Harriet won over to the side of the Easterners. At twenty -one she finally lost all her Western possessions to her 'noble' Eastern husband.

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. 121. Ibid., p.334.

Jhabvala is at her best with her satire in the novel. She makes fun of the Rawul when on his birthday he is being weighed against all the spiritual books of the world and the balance would not stand still. It could be stabilised only when the books were rearranged in a special manner. Another instance that conveys the satire of Jhabvalais when the Rawul uses different methods to denote the univision of the East and the West. The Rawul wants to rise above all limitations and boundaries. He leads a movement that aims at a merger of the East with the West. That is why he shows his keenness on a marriage between Harriet and Crishi in which he saw a literal translation of his movement. On his birthday a "truly cross-cultural group of instruments played their cross-cultural synthesis of sounds: and everyone applauded as the Rawul swayed there in midair, balanced against the wisdoms of past ages.<sup>122</sup> Then Jhabvala makes fun of Babaji, a precursor of the Rawul in London, whose movement operated on a smaller scale than that of the Rawul. In his time he had many affairs with English girls and now he had fallen in for Harriet. But his movement proved to be a failure and he had to selloff his property to a

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122. Ruth Praver Jhabwala, Three Continents, New York: Simon and Schuster Inc, First Fireside Edition, 1988, p. 270.

much prosperous and successful contender, the Rawul.

In this novel although the story is absolutely new, the three favourite themes of Jhabvala have been repeated. Goonaratne observes:

Mrs Jhabvala is having another bash at three favourite themes: charismatic movements, India; and sexual thralldom. About the first she has little new to say; Indians she doesn't seem to like much any more...<sup>123</sup>.

The whole story of the Three Continents is about how under the garb of spiritualism and mysticism the East makes a fool of the Western maleable minds. According to Goonaratne, its a warning "to dumb Anglo Saxon girls not to fall in with phoney Eastern sects".<sup>124</sup>

So we see that although the novel aims at a merger of the East and the West, the effort necessary for such a reconciliation is lacking on the part of the writer. It is more of a satire than a genuine eagerness that we discern in her. This reveals the point of hopelessness that Jhabvala has reached in her

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123. Yasmine Goonaratne, op.cit., p. 333.

124. Ibid., p.332.

mission of reconciling the two diverse cultures. There could have been some chances of a harmonious mixture of the two cultures if the good points of both the cultures were brought face to face and made to unite, but in this novel Jhabvala brings forth the bad of the west in confrontation with the worst aspects of the East. Hence the continuation of the conflict even in her last novel, though the hope of a reconciliation has not been altogether abandoned.

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CHAPTER - IV

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT IN  
THE NOVELS OF KAMALA MARKANDAYA AND  
RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA

Two hundred years of British rule over India had made Indians virtually mental slaves to the English so much so that they considered everything English superior to all that was Indian. Although there were many good inductions also, yet the emulation of those values engendered a sense of inferiority among the Indians for their own culture that was in fact much superior to the Western one. As the West was the master of the East materially, it overshadowed all the good aspects of the Eastern culture. Western values, such as, equality, mixing of sexes, contempt for elaborate religious rites, tradition and conventions, right of an independent identity for women, materialism, a practical approach towards life, belief in hollow exhibitionism and false display of wealth began impinging upon Indian culture.

Both Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala depict the consequent cultural conflict in their novels. Both situate themselves differently and

present, interestingly enough two contrastive perspectives in their novels. Jhabvala spent her childhood in Germany and emigrated to England at the age of twelve, where she grew up and took an M.A. degree in English. At the age of twenty four she left Britain for India after being married to Cyrus Jhabvala, an Indian architect. Having been brought up in England, India was a cultural enigma for her at first. She loved to make discoveries and delve into every mystery of the Indian society, religion and culture. All was so different from what she had known till now. She said, "I was enraptured. I felt I understood India so well. I loved everything."<sup>1</sup> She lived in India for twenty-five years in all. Gradually as time passed she began feeling that India had begun to get on her nerves. It was becoming too much for her. So she shut herself from its heat and dust and began writing novels that had a pronounced ironical touch in them. She became bitter and began criticizing the India that was bearing down upon her. Jhabvala managed to retain her identity. With this background behind her she could not help writing such novels that indicated her efforts to resist Indian culture trying to engulf her identity.

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1. "A novelist of India reflects two worlds", New York Times, Tuesday 17 July 1973.

She finally left India and took the citizenship of the United States of America. There again she was faced with a different culture. At the same time she could not get away from her twenty-five years of experience in India. What she could do now was to combine all her experiences fruitfully. In an interview she once said :

Something I would like to do is combine my three backgrounds: my European background because it was Continental; and then I had an English education. Then I had a 25 year immersion into India and now I am beginning an immersion into America. So if I can bring all these elements together, well, that's just fine by me.<sup>2</sup>

So her last two novels exemplify her conscious attempt to present all the "three backgrounds" in a combined manner.

With Kamala Markandaya circumstances were different. She was born and brought up in India. After attending Madras University she went to London for

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2. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, interviewed by Patricia W. Mooney: 'Another Dimension of Living', in News week 31, October 1977.

further studies. Hailing from an orthodox Brahmin family she married an Englishman and settled permanently in London as an expatriate. Even while staying in England she could never get over her cultural past that had been impressed upon her in her infancy and youth. Her approach towards India was more sober and insightful than that of Jhabvala's. This was so because she could understand India well. That is why her observations are not those of mannerisms and superficial physical descriptions alone. What her novels mostly deal with is the encounter of the two cultures and the resultant conflict suffered by her characters, particularly the Indian ones. Her novels also reflect the dilemma spawned by her expatriation with which she was obsessed.

Jhabvala, on the other hand, although stayed in India for so long, always remained an outsider. She could not identify herself with the Indians. They always remained to her objects of curiosity and , therefore, of study. Jhabvala notices even the very commonplace things and gives beautiful and appropriate descriptions of them in her novel especially, the early ones. She explains every peculiar detail with 'excitement', 'rapture' and 'love'. Jhabvala usually picks out the typical to the extent of being comic,

characters of society and studies their behaviour inside out. It is said that Jhabvala's characters come "with a sense of suggestion and poetic blurring"<sup>3</sup>. Even Indians do not know the life-style of their brethren as well as she does. Her first novel, To Whom She Will, has a Rai Bahadur Chand who is a 'distinguished barrister' whom everybody fears, but he is also a thoroughly selfish person eager to project his own personality in the society through every means possible. Lala Narayan Das of The Nature of Passion is an upstart businessman weighing every action of his in relation to his business. Even the marriage of his daughter is important as far as it helps him to get a contract and so give a fillip to his business prospects. Hardayal, the father of Shakuntala, in Esmond in India is a typical "middle aged gentleman of cultural interests, who had in his youth been attracted by the 'madness' and 'danger' of the struggle for independence but, guided with gentle firmness by his wife Madhuri, had followed the cautious course he now likes to term 'the life of the spirit'."<sup>4</sup> Sometimes

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3. Raji Narasimhan, Sensibility Under Stress: Aspects of Indo English Fiction, New Delhi: Ashajanak Publisher(India) Pvt.Ltd., 1974, p.36.
  4. Yasmine Goonaratne, Silence, Exile and Cunning: The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala, New Delhi: Orient Longman, Revised edition, 1991, pp.94-95.

while comparing himself with Ramnath his conscience pricks him for using the independence of the country for his own advancement. Prem, of The Householder, is a typical middle-class teacher struggling for a comfortable living and a place in the society. Mr. Khanna, the Principal, for whom studies are not so important as are good food, money and social life is another character who is closely studied by Jhabvala with a tinge of subtle ironic humour. Gulzari Lal of Get Ready for Battle is a typical upper middle-class immoral and egoistic businessman for whom money and business is more important than family and human feelings. He makes use of Kusum but never intends paying her back by marrying her or even feeling obliged for the pains she takes in making him happy. Another character of whom Jhabvala makes a study is Rao Saheb of A New Dominion. He is a typical politician who is trying to legitimise his property with the help of politics. Through him Jhabvala takes the opportunity of making fun of the Indian politicians. With the help of Inder Lal Jhabvala enters a family of the lower middle-class and describes it to the full in Heat and Dust. Such descriptions are very interesting as they are not given by an Indian who is well acquainted by the Indian pattern of living, but by a European for whom these settings are new and unique. Moreover, Jhabvala tends

to point out very precisely the places where things are not all right.

But such descriptions would have continued to remain witty and pleasurable if they would have stuck to their simpleness, enthusiasm and thrill at every new sight evident in her early novels. Jhabvala tends gradually to turn ironic and sarcastic which make her descriptions although humorous, very sour for the Indians to read. Her "mode of the barbed humour, the gentle sting"<sup>5</sup> gets fixed and she uses it in all her later novels.

While describing the backwardness of India Jhabvala seems to have acquired a sense of superiority. Her attitude becomes snooty towards a one time slave nation still struggling to raise its head. She satirises the pitiable condition of Indians who are caught between the Western culture and the Eastern one and are trying to thrash out the problem. Instead of getting to the roots of problems the Indian society is faced with, she can only see the impact it has created

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5. Raji Narasimhan, Sensibility Under Stress : Aspects of Indo English Fiction, New Delhi: Ashajanak Publishers (India) Pvt. Ltd. , 1974, p.36.

on its people. She sardonically observes the confusion of values in the mind of the Easterners. Jhabvala has no sympathy for the society which is trying to get over the two-hundred-year old thralldom. She does not appreciate its efforts but her eyes keep moving to the places where the rot has set in. Her method of conveying the satire and irony is very subtle. While seeming to be making a harmless and innocent description she sometimes drives home her point of satire. This is evident when she is describing the character of the very much Indian Hari of To Whom She Will. Amrita is shown to be in love with Hari's Indian characteristics - his unpunctuality, his unpracticalness, his unwordliness and the awkward manner in which he handles his knife and fork:

... his unpunctuality was for her part of his charm. He was delightfully unpractical, so truly Indian, so unworldly, that he could not think of hard-set European things like time and clocks.<sup>6</sup>

Here Jhabvala chooses a very subtle way of criticising the Indians' casualness in general. In

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6. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, To Whom She Will, Great Britain : Penguin Books, 1985, p.21.



Esmond in India Esmond is seen throughout to be very critical of the Indian way of life. He hates their unclean habits, their food, their climate and their women. Esmond has an air of superciliousness about him which also represents Jhabvala's attitude towards India. Nimmi, in The Nature of Passion thinks that going to clubs, speaking English and imitating English mannerism would help her edge her way gradually into the high society. She feels ashamed of her sisters who have very cheap tastes and mannerisms of the lower middle-class. They have no qualms about blowing their noses and scratching under the armpits in public. Here Jhabvala, with her technique of "barbed humour, the gentle sting", subtly criticises the tilted values that the issues of upstart businessmen developed during the post-independence era.

All such sardonic criticism is not noticeable in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. Although we find her also criticising India, its society and its traditional culture as well as its civilization, we are never made to feel ashamed of our drawbacks. We in fact feel sorry for her characters embroiled in the various difficult situations that she takes up in her novels. We try to find out ways of solving the problem and go deep down

to the root of it along with the writer. The writer labours to find the critical point where her characters went wrong and she tries to find solutions to it so that we are able to move towards a peaceful and a harmonious world. The Indian reader never feels ashamed of being criticized by an outsider who has no sympathy for its poverty and the sense of hypocrisy that has entered the society as a result of its contact with the west.

While comparing and contrasting Markandaya with Jhabvala. We cannot pass over the point that Jhabvala lacks the nationalist feelings with which Kamala Markandaya is imbued. Her intense patriotism is reflected in the manner in which politics enters her novels. She does not, like Jhabvala, use her politicians to further dramatise the fast crumbling down of the society of India. In Markandaya's novels politics enters as an integral part of the plot. Two of them, Some Inner Fury and The Golden Honeycomb have politics at the centre round which the whole story revolves. They are set in the period of the freedom struggle of India. In Some Inner Fury the struggle for Independence is the link joining all the characters and deciding for them their future actions. Although Mirabai loves Richard very much, she has to desert him

in the end because he is an Englishman and she is an Indian. There was the difference of "your people" and "my people" between them. This lack of compatibility was difficult to bridge especially in the wake of the violent 'Quit India' movement. Similarly, politics determines the story of The Golden Honeycomb as well. While the Bawajirajs are mere puppets in the hands of the English, Rabi has made himself the leader of the Indian group fighting for freedom. In the novel the characters have been divided into those who support the British and help them in ruling over India, and those who oppose their rule and fight them to push them off their motherland.

But in Jhabvala's novels neither are such divisions present nor is the situation placed in that period of time. Fighting for freedom and patriotism are things of the past. Her novels are of the post-Independence era. There are characters who had taken part in the Freedom struggle in their youth and who take pride in remembering nostalgically the number of time they had gone to jail and the way they had sacrificed everything for the sake of independence and Gandhiji. In the post-Independence period such fighters have remained either fighters - as fighting against corruption and Westernism left back by the

English, or exploiters of the society existing after Independence. While Ramnath (Esmond in India) and Radha's husband ( To Whom She Will) are examples of such politicians who sacrificed everything for the nation and never expected anything in return, Hardayal (Esmond in India) is an example of the politician who, although at first worked with the freedom fighters, later left the path of self sacrifice and began following the path of self-aggrandisement and thereby making a place for himself in the society that was also now running after fame and material progress. Her novels often depict a struggle between these two types of characters.

Such tussles between two antithetical sets of characters, though in a different sense, are also present in Kamala Markandaya's novels. There are many different reasons for such conflicts. They arise whenever an Indian and an English character come face to face, or when there is an encounter of Indians supporting modernistic views with those supporting traditional and conventional views, or there is an encounter of the English who have identified themselves with India with those who have maintained their own identity and remained separated from its people. Such

conflict is present in the novel, Nectar in a Sieve. In it Rukmini and Nathan stand for old, traditional Indian values. In the modern world they are faced with the grim prospects of alienation that the tannery signified which itself represented modern science and reason. Kenny, the English doctor, who symbolised the English values of equality, "progressive enlightenment and the need for a constructive programme of rural reform and social service"<sup>7</sup>, could not match the wavelength of Rukmini who was full of faith and hope. Such conflict between modernism and traditionalism is also evident in To Whom She Will as well as in The Nature of Passion. Amrita's family is westernised. It speaks English, eats with knife and fork and indulges in social service'. The story revolves round Amrita and her lover, Hari, who belongs to a very traditional family. Coming from different backgrounds they try to maintain their relationship against great odds for a long time but eventually they rift apart. In Nature of Passion, Nimmi, belonging to a traditional family wants to be identified in the society with modernity. In the same family there are both types of people. While some

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7. S.C. Harrex, "A Sense of Identity," The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, Vol. III, No.1 (1971), pp. 65-79.

are conventional and orthodox, the others think themselves to be iconoclasts and 'forward'. That is why a conflict is always present and an argument brewing in this family of Lala Narayan Das Verma. Lala Narayan Das himself is an example of such a conflict. He is a businessman with no great cultural roots. So he keeps rolling this way and that, i.e., between traditionalism and modernism, whichever suits him best and whichever is more profitable. Some Inner Fury has two Englishmen who are in conflict with the Indians. Although both the Englishmen are in harmony with the Indians, the freedom struggle then going on in the country does not let them stay in peace and so they feel compelled to alienate themselves. Moreover, there is also a conflict between conventional society and the modern one going on. Kit has been to England and so he cannot get along with his 'old fashioned' wife, Premala . The novel ends on a tragic note as the novelist cannot make such diverse characters unite either in mind or in body.

Such tension in married life is also evident in Esmond in India of Jhabvala. Esmond, an Englishman marries Gulab who hails from a family which has strong, Indian, cultural roots. She loves Indian food, strong

Indian scents and is indifferent towards the modern furniture with which the house is furnished and of which Esmond is very proud. He has a craze for high society, money, orderliness and sophistication - all of which are totally absent in his wife. The two people hailing from two absolutely different cultures could not pull along together and had finally to break away from each other. Etta, in A Backward Place was many times married to and divorced from the wealthy Indians. She was brought to India on account of being married to an Indian but was never happy here. She always felt herself to have been, 'trapped'. To Judy she advised, "Marriages, my dear, are made to be broken, that's one of the rules of modern civilization."<sup>8</sup> For her Indian society was a 'primitive' one. As Judy conformed to the Indian way of living and her Indian family Etta developed a contempt for her.

A Silence of Desire of Kamala Markandaya also reflects the tension arising from conflict between the view points of the two cultures. In the novel they are represented by Dandekar and his wife. Dandekar represents the practical, scientific and a reasoning

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8. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, A Backward Place, Delhi: John Murray (Publishers) Ltd., 1965, p.5.

mind of the West, and his wife, Sarojini, faith in spiritualism and mysticism. Such spiritualism in sharp contrast with Western materialism, as is present in Kamala Markandaya's novels, A Silence of Desire and Possession is absent from Jhabvala's novels. In Kamala Markandaya's novels Indian spiritualism is a force to be reckoned with and Western materialism has to gather much strength to face this indeterminate, powerful and pure energy. Whenever both meet they talk at absolutely different levels - the Westerner at its own materialistic and logical one and the spiritual Easterner at a level which is 'beyond reason'.<sup>9</sup> The result is that the Westerner is totally puzzled by the Easterner's attitude. Even in Nectar in a Sieve Kenny thinks it beyond himself to understand the complacency and the dependence on fate and God of Rukmini. In A Silence of Desire Sarojini does not expect Dandekar to understand her attitude towards 'healing by faith'. Both Kenny and Dandekar get puzzled and give in by the end of their stories narrated in the novel. In both the novels, although Indian spiritualism seems to have lost to the materialism of the West, the characters representing Westernism feel themselves defeated before its vague but almighty power. In Possession the

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9. Kamala Markandaya, A Silence of Desire, London: Four Square Books, 1966, p.63.



position is a bit different. Here Westernism seems to be winning over Easternism in the beginning but evidently loses in the end. The whole novel is a story of conflict between the two values, both of them being represented by Caroline Bell and the Swamy. Val is the guinea pig upon whom the two try to caste their influence as an experiment. In the end the Swamy wins and Val also comes out of his position to regain his identity.

Jhabvala has no such ideas about Indian spirituality. She does not think it to be a force that is beyond an ordinary man's comprehension. In fact she does not try to delve into that aspect of spiritualism at all. She only takes up such situations in which the spiritual leaders are charlatans trying to exploit the Western people. Only in The Householder the Swamy seems to be a genuine one. In A New Dominion the Swamy exploits the English ladies physically and feeds them with wrong notions about ways of discovering themselves. In Search of Love and Beauty sees a spiritual leader in Leo who has a peculiar method of Self-realisation with the help of the body and senses. Three Continents crosses all levels of hypocrisy. The Rawul indulges in struggling and cheating under the garb of his

'movement'. Mostly the Westerners are seen to get trapped by the mystic aura surrounding Indian spiritualism. None of the characters seem to understand the religion of India. They keep making guesses and experimenting with it, thereby getting more and more entangled in its web. Hans and Kitty of The Householder are good examples of such Westerners who, although cannot make head or tail of Indian philosophy, try to show off their knowledge of it. Chidananda in Heat and Dust is also caught in the web of Indian religion, but relieves himself of it in time, before it could devour him.

A Handful of Rice neither has a spiritual theme, nor does it have English characters in conflict with the Indian ones. But there is still a conflict between the East and the West present in the novel. The protagonist developed a dual personality as the Western values begin dominating over the Eastern ones in the society. Ravi is seen to be floundering between alienation and affinity. Sometimes he is drawn towards modernism represented by the modern values of accumulating money by any means. At other times he is drawn towards Apu and his traditional ideals. His mental agony can to some extent, be compared to Hardayal's sense of guilt and depression when he

compared the real values with the superficial values for which he was now living. The same kind of tension is also evident in the mind of Ramnath's wife in Esmond in India. Although she admires her husband for his past heroic deeds during the freedom struggle, she does not like the life of an exile her husband now prefers when he could have exploited his political connections for his own gain. She keeps seducing him into accepting some job which could restore her social standing. But he and his son, Narayan, are staunchly against the false values in which the modern society believes. They keep themselves miles away from such hollow exhibitionism. Radha, Amrita's mother in To Whom She Will, is a somewhat similar character to Ramnath's wife. Even she admired her husband for the sacrifices he had made but she always repented her loss of material wealth, power and prestige in the upper class society.

Get Ready for Battle also enshrines a conflict ensuing from a society consisting of supporters from both the camps. Oriental values of love and humanity are pitted against the occidental values of money, ostentation and atomisation of families. While Sarla Devi and Gautam are on one side of the fence, Gulzari Lal and Vishnu are on the other side. Conflict between

two sets of values figures also in the novel, Two Virgins of Kamala Markandaya. The Western values stealthily enter the quiet village and seduce Lalitha, who herself is quite attracted to it.

Coming to seductions, we can link them to the interaction between the Eastern and the Western cultures and its consequences. It can be noticed that none of the novels of both the novelists show the seduction by the opposite culture ever fructifying satisfactory. It either results in an outright abortion or in the birth of a child who fails to adjust comfortably to either of the two cultures. Many examples of seduction as depicted in Jhabvala's novels, In Search of Love and Beauty and A New Dominion, reveal no result except a continuation of an unequal friendship and exploitation of the Westerners by the Easterners demonstrating Jhabvala's subtle bias against the latter. Although in Two Virgins and in Heat and Dust Lalitha and Olivia get pregnant it is sad that none of the pregnancies lead to birth. Only one, that of Ira, in Nectar in a Sieve bore fruit. There, ironically, a declared barren woman is blessed with a child. But her child is treated as an outcaste as he has inherited some physical features of his English father. He seems abnormal to the villagers

as he cannot bear the intensity of the sun in India. Thus such unfruitful seductions lead us to the conclusion that both the writers believe that no worthwhile union is possible between the two diverse cultures unless the merger is of two equals. Even a child of marriage of Esmond and Gulab cannot come up equally to the expectations of both the parents. Although born of a union between the two cultures his Indian-ness overpowers his English-ness to the dissatisfaction of Esmond who has great pride in his own culture.

The Nowhere Man is one more attempt on the part of Kamala Markandaya towards the resolution of the conflict between the two cultures. In the novel, Srinivas goes with an open mind to settle in England and makes an effort to be accepted by the English society. Here the protagonist wants to identify and merge himself with the English. He is ready to compromise to any extent whatsoever. But when everything seems clear and the author is about to signal for the movement towards a harmonious intermixture of both the cultures, dark clouds suddenly rise in the form of racialism and all hopes are blasted. Even in Some Inner Fury and The Coffer Dams all effort for a compromise is laid waste in the end.

Such situations, in which the foreigner is ready to adapt himself to the country of his adoption but the country does not accept him or appreciate his compromising attitude towards it, do not arise in Jhabvala's novels. In her novels, if an English sheds all his superiority complex and makes a genuine effort at a merger with the Indian society then the society accepts him with open arms. Judy, an Englishwoman married to a lower middle class Indian in A Backward Place, is a good example of the acceptance of a foreigner by the Indians. She lives harmoniously in the tradition ridden family of Bal. It has been called by M.N.Sharma as one of the "Sandhi Novels"<sup>10</sup> of Jhabvala as it gives full scope to racial interaction. Esmond (Esmond in India) and Marietta (In Search of Love and Beauty) on the other hand, could not shed off their superciliousness and are, therefore, tortured by the Indians who see them as aliens intruding upon their land.

But nowhere is the effort towards a compromise flagging in the novels of the two writers. Almost every

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10. M.N.Sarma, "Of Emigrants and Exiles: Changed Perspective in Jhabvala's Fiction," Litterit, 3 No. 2 (December 1977), p.37.

novel has such characters who want to make compromises with the representatives of the other culture so as to bring them closer to each other. Both The Coffe Dams and Heat and Dust have wives sympathetic towards the exploited Indians who also try to divert the attention of their mechanical, workoholic husbands towards the humane side of life and the people whom they are exploiting. Helen understands the language and the problems of the tribals, whereas Olivia sympathises with the position of the Nawab. Kenny (Nectar in a Sieve), Hickey, Richard (Some Inner Fury), Mrs. Pickering (The Nowhere Man) and Tully (The Pleasure City) in the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Judy (A Backward Place), Olivia and the narrator (Heat and Dust) are some of the English characters that try to make a compromise with India. But none of them except, to some extent, Judy and the narrator, that is to say, Olivia's granddaughter succeed in the end.

As far as ethos and matter in the novels of the two writers are concerned there is one marked difference. Jhabvala has less variety of stories as well as locales. Her stories either deal with intimate family matters and the discord arising in it on account of the different set of values of its various

members, or with the spiritual aspect of Indian culture. Likewise, there is very little change of scenes in her earlier novels. However, she begins to expand her canvas from the seventh novel onwards, i.e., from A New Dominion. Her characters now move out of Delhi to Benaras in the East to Maupur in the West. In the last two novels her characters step out of India to America and Europe. But unlike Jhabvala, Markandaya has a better command over the geography of India and keeps moving her characters from place to place in her various novels. She can also very well describe the setting of a village for her story. Her urban cities are not Delhi, like those of Jhabvala, but usually South Indian ones. She even does not give as much importance to the name and situation of her locale as she gives to her stories. The conflict that the scene of action gives rise to is more important than the description for description's sake in which Jhabvala sometimes indulges. Her descriptions are such that they convey the general ethos of the area and the people she is writing about. But for Jhabvala the locale is important as every nook and corner of it is a thing unique in itself and about which she has to write, as such details really influence her and, therefore, indirectly her characters. Jhabvala has an eye for catching such details which are infact the



characteristic features of India. Nowhere else had Jhabvala seen open dormitories, such close-knit families, dirt, heat, hospitality in spite of poverty and such customs as sati and other religious rites. Jhabvala found that only India had Sadhus in every street and corner and a religion that is incomprehensible and many dimensional. Her novels are full of such descriptions. She writes about what she observes around her. She came to India in the post Independence, post partition period when Western India was in the grip of a feverish activity of building up what it had lost in the freedom struggle and the partition after it. At the time people equated progress with Westernism. There was a race for all types of material gain and many upstarts began replacing the old reputed families by outdoing them in wealth and fame. Corruption had entered such power hungry hoardes. Those who did not join the race and still believed in an honest and idealistic living were left behind struggling to make both ends meet. So far she has been able to portray the society truly but when she comes to the division of social classes she is led astray by her senses. Jhabvala tends to divide the society not on the basis of caste, as it really is, but on the basis of money and sophistication. Her

divisions are like those of the Western ones. The well-bred and the wealthy are placed in the upper-class. The upstart businessman constitutes the middle-class and the school teacher and clerk form the lower class.

Markandaya, being an Indian, naturally divides the society on the basis of the hated caste -system and at the same time criticizes it in her novels. But in spite of such familiarity of Markandaya with India the distance between her present abode and that of her past seems great. This great divide sometimes make her descriptions of the Indian scene vague, general and unreal. Many times her cities are one of the cities in the South, having no peculiarities of their own. With Jhabvala the problem is that she cannot identify with the Indian masses, but Markandaya's problem is that she views India from a distance. That is why her characters tend to become general ones and not particular. They just remain as representatives of a particular group of class. Another characteristic common to the two novelists is that both of them crave for a non-Indian audience. Jhabvala as well as Markandaya keeps explaining India in her novels evidently to those who do not belong to the country and

therefore do not know its peculiar ways and customs. Talking about this habit of Markandaya Shyam M. Asnani says, "This over-consciousness of the western audience is responsible for her habit of explaining at length the native tradition and terms."<sup>11</sup> Markandaya explains to the audience why Rukmini calls her father, 'Apa' and how married women are not expected to take the names of their husbands. In the like manner Jhabvala also gives graphic descriptions of the clothes the Indian wear and the food they eat. When Amrita goes to Premala's house in To Whom She Will, Jhabvala took pains to describe the way Prema had dressed up to look 'new and expensive' and the eatables she had to offer, "huge yellow ladoos, white barfi with breath-thin silver paper, brown gulab jamuns oozing syrup, golden rings of jalebi"<sup>12</sup>. An Indian audience would have understood by a mere mention of the word 'ladoo', 'barfi' and 'jalebi' what they ought to look like. A description of them was necessary only for a non-Indian audience.

So, a comparative study of the novels of both writers has led to the conclusion that they have many

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11. Shyam M. Asnani, "Characters and Technique in Kamala Markandaya's Novels", Rajasthan University Studies in English, Vol. XI (1978), p.68.

12. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, To Whom She Will, Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1985, p. 53.

points of similarity as well as dissimilarity. They are similar in their writings when they configure the cross-cultural conflict. But so far as their sensibility is concerned we notice a difference. While Markandaya's sensibility is predominantly that of an 'insider' though she has become an 'outsider', "by the force of circumstance", Jhabvala's is an 'outsider' one though she has become an insider, by the same force of circumstance as is evidenced in her novels (with the exception of her last two novels). Both the novelists also cannot identify themselves with the countries they have adopted. Throughout her novels Markandaya continues writing as an expatriate about India and views it from an unfortunate distance, whereas Jhabvala, though she does not situate most of her novels outside India, always tends to miss its essence. But the specific purposes of both the novelists are diametrically different. The purpose of Markandaya's presentation of India is to sell India outside 'wholesale' whereas the purpose of Jhabvala's presentation of India at close quarters also proves unfortunate as she deliberately focuses only on the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies sardonically. Hence, a striking difference between the sensibility of both Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala.

## CHAPTER - V

### CONCLUSION

A close study of both the novelists, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, reveals that all their novels hinge on a conflict between cultures of the East and the West. But they are not the first to introduce a cross-cultural conflict in their novels. This interaction could not but have begun with the use of English in writing Indian fiction. The employment of English language by Indian writers brought them into contact with the Western culture as well, whose customary beliefs, social forms and material trials were absolutely different. When the two came face to face there was an interaction which gave birth to a literature that though attempted a fusion of the two configured a conflict and a tension between them.

Coming from such different backgrounds and having to settle in countries which have the opposite kinds of cultures to the ones on which they have been nurtured, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Praver Jhabvala labour under a cultural conflict which finds a beautiful expression in their novels. Markandaya, after spending her childhood and youth in India had to settle in England and Jhabvala, after spending her childhood

in Germany and youth in England, had to lead a married life in India and after that a divorced life in New York. Although such a variety of conflicting circumstances of their lives provided them with a wide range of experiences to be dramatised in their novels, it also cured them with a duality of self whose synthesis they have been trying throughout their novels to reach. That is why, their novels also reflect the social, cultural and spiritual tensions that are already present in their mind.

As Markandaya is an Indian by birth her novels have a kind of warmth and understanding towards the Indian culture which Jhabvala's works lack. Her first novel, Nectar in a Sieve presents a sympathetic account of the poor villager as well as portrays the disdainful attitude of the Indians towards all industrial advancement. Their faith in God and their empty hopes are beyond the understanding of Kenny, the English doctor. All Markandaya's novels depict the cross-cultural conflict either literally by placing the Indian against the European or ideally by juxtaposing the values of both the cultures. Some Inner Fury has a

cross-cultural conflict both of the first as well as the second kind. There is the Quit India Movement going on in India which has divided the loyalties of the Indians and armed many of them against the English rulers. Moreover, there are Indians who have been educated in England and have a Western way of thinking coming into contact with Indians who think highly of the Indian way of living. Both kinds of Indians cannot get along well and are often at loggerheads with each other. Even Kit himself is an embodiment of conflict. His circumstances are very similar to those of Markandaya who also, at times, suffers from indecision when it comes to choosing between the two sets of values. Having been bred upon one, no matter how much a person has been groomed by the other culture, in times of crisis he tends to fall back upon his original culture and breeding. Because of racial tension Richard and Mira were separated and Mira also, so unlike herself, took the decision of leaving Richard so as to choose the path of least resistance for herself. A Silence of Desire is about the conflict of science versus religious faith. Although, evidently science and logic won in the end, Eastern faith seems to have scored subtly over the Western materialism. Possession her next novel, has Caroline as the Westerner trying to transplant Valmiki in the West.

But when faced with crisis Val takes the important decision of going back to his roots. In A Handful of Rice, Ravi is faced with the twin crisis of providing food for his family and fighting against the unadjustable Western values creeping into his small world. The Coffer Dams again has Europeans placed against the Indians who are a backward lot. They are in need of the expert British guidance for their progress which has been provided for by the English rulers of the country, but at the same time they cannot put up with the resultant encroaching industrialisation. The Nowhere Man is a novel that comes closest to the psychological pressures that the novelist herself must be experiencing as an expatriate. Srinivas has emigrated with his family to England, but in spite of his forty years of stay he still feels himself to be an alien in his adopted country. The novel, Two Virgins, goes back to the theme of identity crisis that had also been experienced by Ravi in A Handful of Rice as a result of the conflict of values. Her next novel is set in the period of the freedom struggle. The Golden Honeycomb has Indian and European characters, both pitched against each other. Here the conflicting parties take the shape of the ruler and the ruled, one fighting for the freedom of the country, while the other trying to suppress the fire of revolt



in their subjects. The Pleasure City again, like The Coffor Dams, studies the problems of the natives at the approach of science in their village.

In all the novels we find that Markandaya is trying vainly to reach a compromise between the two cultures . Throughout she has condemned racialism and commended those characters who have at least attempted to harmonise the two cultures. Kenny, Hickey, Roshan, Bashiam and Rabi are a few characters that have been idealised by Markandaya for genuinely striving towards the fusion of the two cultures.

In spite of Kamala Markandaya being an 'insider' the novels lack stark realism because of her physical aloofness from India. Socio-political reality in India has been undergoing fast changes ever since Kamala Markandaya left India. But the various images of socio-political reality in India never changed in Kamala Markandaya's mind . They got fixed in her psyche. As a matter of fact she failed to keep up with the changing Indian reality. Without bothering to perceive how far Indian reality has changed since she left India she kept on producing novels one after the other. Consequently, her novels failed to present

socio-political reality faithfully. It would not be an overstatement of facts if we say that her novels dealing with social reality of India bears various chinks if not wide chasms. She was an 'insider' but the perspective that she presents in her novels is one of an 'insider' turned 'outsider'.

Jhabvala, on the other hand, is an 'outsider' turned 'insider'. She was married to an Indian and after that for a few years Ruth Praver Jhabvala was in 'raptures' about her Indian surroundings and the ways of its people. She described every detail of Indian society with enthusiasm. But gradually, as years passed, she began feeling a kind of growing alienation from the Indian culture. She felt she had not been able to identify herself fully with it in spite of all her efforts. Although her children and husband were Indian she continued to be an alien at heart. Gradually her early 'rapture' and 'enthusiasm' got changed into irony and sarcasm. . In novel after novel she increasingly adopted a posture of sarcasm which, of course, later on developed into her major fictional strategy which enables her to comment sardonically on Indian reality without making any kind of compromise.

Her early novels, To Whom She Will and The Nature of Passion have simple plots but elaborate descriptions of the life style and society of the upper and lower middle class Indians living in Delhi after the Independence . They have Amrita and Nimmi as rebel characters; one rebelling against her over sophisticated and pseudo-english family, while the other rebelling against her unsophisticated family that had 'cheap' and unrefined manners. With Esmond in India Jhabvala opens her ironical style. Like Jhabvala, Esmond feels himself to have been 'trapped' in India with an Indian wife and a son. There was no understanding whatsoever between the English husband and his Indian wife and Esmond kept yearning and making plans to reach his homeland. Finally Gulab herself broke the marriage as she saw that there was no hope for a compromise between her values and her husband's. Jhabvala's next novel, The Householder, is also full of irony and sarcasm. The Westerners in the novel seem to be very knowledgeable about Indian spiritualism and philosophy, whereas the Indian characters are miles away from it and are busy in acquiring material gains. The story is about a lower middle-class school teacher who is striving to make his both ends meet. Here, instead of sympathising with the poor teacher, Jhabvala

takes this opportunity of making him the butt of her humour and sarcasm. Get Ready for Battle, again, has the same theme, of the clash of values, as is present in the first two novels, though the plot is a bit complicated. In A Backward Place there are a number of European characters living in India, all having different perspectives towards the country. While some cannot identify themselves with its culture, others have made compromises and beautifully adapted themselves to its society, while still others only talk of a compromise but in fact remain aloof from it. With A New Dominion are introduced the spiritual god heads of India who exploit the Westerners materially as well as physically. Those Westerners who adore the Eastern mysticism and philosophy are led into a trap by these spiritual leaders. In this novel, the conflict is not restricted to only a clash of values but there is also the literal confrontation of the Europeans with the Indians. The Heat and Dust has again a number of Europeans who have different perspectives towards India. While some are sympathetic towards it, others deal with it either in a professional and matter of fact way or willingly misinterpret it into something that seems to be altogether unacceptable. Those who "love her best" are the ones who are most vulnerable

to the 'heat' and 'dust' of India. The spiritual theme that had been skipped over in this novel, figures again in the next novel i.e., in In Search of Love and Beauty. Here again, the Westerners are exploited by the spiritual gurus of the East. In Three Continents the same theme takes on a hedious form. The East bluffs the West with its phoney spiritualism under the garb of which it carries on smuggling and other immoral deeds. The discontented West falls an easy prey to the wily, scheming Gurus of the East. Throughout it can be observed that Jhabvala in her novels always tends to take into view the wrong side of the East and does not leave any opportunity of criticizing all the bad points of its society as if she is trying to find an excuse of not being able to arrive at a compromise between the two cultures.

Thus we see that although there has been an effort made by the Indian-English writers, Jhabvala and Markandaya being no exceptions, to resolve the conflict that always arises when the cultures of the East and the West come into contact with each other, none have been able to achieve this in a satisfactory manner. A few characters are present in the novels of both Markandaya and Jhabvala who show a path towards a

harmony between the two opposite cultures, but they are not always successful in their goal. In their novels, Markandaya and Jhabvala depict such a conflict that has no solution in the near future, but at the same time also convey the message that such a goal is not a far cry. It might take a "hundred years" to bring the East and the West together, but the task is not altogether impossible. The "twain shall meet" as the fictional attempt of both Markandaya and Jhabvala demonstrate. Both the novelists have made commendable efforts towards illustrating the concept of global village which was beautifully evoked by Arnold in his short lyric, "To Marguerite".

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